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[THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT.]

WINIFRED WYNNE; OR, THE GOLDSMITH'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"The Lost Coronet," "One Sparkle of Gold," etc.

CHAPTER I.

Men are but children of a larger growth,
Our appetites as apt to change as theirs,
And full as craving too, and full as vain,
And yet the soul shut up in her dark room
Viewing as clear abroad, at home sees nothing.

"MAMMA, where is Winifred?—I want Winifred Wynne."

And the pretty little spoiled daughter of the Lady Lisle stamped her small foot in decided confirmation of her imperious demand.

The Lady Isadore Lisle gave a sort of despairing sigh as the girl hung on her with caressing pertinacity.

"Really, Viola, you are perfectly infatuated about that child. I am sure I am very sorry Lady Churchill ever introduced her to you. It was extremely thoughtless of her, especially as she is only the daughter of a tradesman, I believe. Why cannot you associate with those of your own rank, I wonder?"

"Because I like Winifred best, mamma; she never quarrels, and she has always something to amuse me," was the petulant reply. "I thought she was coming to-day with Lady Churchill. May she stay with me? I want her," again demanded the tiny tyrant of the nursery, whose beauty and birth prospects might fairly for tell future triumphs, of which her present infant dominion was but a foreshadowing.

But before Lady Lisle could reply the door opened, and a lady, followed by a girl of some eight or nine years of age, entered the room unannounced.

An eager cry of delight from Viola, and a springing bound towards the youthful visitor, at once proclaimed the child to be the longed-for playmate, and in a few minutes the two were to all appearance busily engrossed in the examination of some new

toys, while the elder ladies greeted each other with some embarrassment.

"Forgive me, madam," half whispered the guest, "I scarcely should have brought my little god-daughter here, after your more than implied disapproval, only it was a safe cover to my visit."

"Safe cover? What can you mean, Sarah? Surely it is no dangerous or disgraceful thing to visit Isadore Lisle, the wife of one of the king's trusted servants," said Lady Lisle, drawing up her slender throat to a queenly dignity, that well nigh brought a smile to the Lady Churchill's lips.

"That is the very danger, Isadore," she replied. "It should not be known that I had any communication with you at this juncture, and yet it could scarcely be safely avoided. You say well that your husband is a trusty attendant of the King James; is his wife as willing to risk something for the king's wife?"

And Lady Churchill's voice sank to a whisper as she spoke the last words.

"I wish you would speak plainly, Sarah," said the hostess, petulantly; "you know I do not concern myself in all these troubles that folks talk about so glibly. It is enough for me to amuse myself to the utmost at home and abroad. I meddle not in what does not concern me."

A look of contempt crossed Sarah Churchill's fine features, and for a moment it seemed doubtful whether it might not find utterance in words, but the impulse was checked as quickly as it rose.

"That is pretty well known, Isadore; that is the very reason why you may be of the greater service in this matter," she said, quietly.

"Good Heavens, Sarah! How mysterious and Sybil-like you are," exclaimed Lady Lisle, eagerly.

"And pray what has Winifred Wynne to do with princesses and politics?" she added, sharply.

"Speak French, Isadore, if you are determined to enlarge on the subject," observed her companion, significantly. "It is enough that I am not used to converse or act without reason, and if you will have patience I will soon enlighten you on the subject."

She glanced at the two little girls as she spoke, and her eyes once directed towards them could scarcely

fail to be riveted for a few moments on the tableau they formed.

Viola Lisle was seated on a low ottoman cushion, her dark chestnut hair flowing in loose profusion on the crimson velvet, and her bright features eagerly listening to the clear, sweet young voice that was explaining some engraving that was apparently too abstruse to be intelligible to the volatile child of rank and wealth.

Winifred stood by her companion's side, her fair, long curls almost mingling with Viola's dark hair, and her large, thoughtful gray eyes shaded by her long brown lashes, as she bent over the richly illuminated book.

It might have been difficult to predict which of these children would grow up most attractively lovely.

Lady Churchill usually gave the palm to her god-daughter, but from those of less discernment and intellect Viola Lisle would have carried the prize of beauty, both present and to come.

"Well," at last interrupted Lady Lisle, in the stipulated French tongue. "What do you want of me, Sarah—or rather what does his majesty require from Horace Lisle's wife?"

And again the spoiled beauty drew herself up in her graceful pride of birth and charms that had been the theme of many a lover and poet and painter.

"The king requires personally nothing," said Lady Churchill, meaningly, "but for one very dear to him, and as such entitled to the service and reverence of his loyal subjects, he asks—shall I say expects?—much."

"I understand," said Lady Lisle, thoughtfully.

"It is as well not to mention names, but I think the personage of whom you speak had better relieve the subjects and herself by removing all cause for anxiety, especially when there is no hope, as I believe now."

"I am glad to hear you say so," returned Lady Churchill, coolly, "because the very thing you purpose is what I have come to arrange. If that is to be accomplished, if there is to be an escape, it must be through our agency. Can I count on your help?"

"On mine!" exclaimed Lady Lisle, starting back, and for the moment forgetting the foreign tongue in which the conversation was held. "Sarah, you must be mad! I would not meddle for the world in—"

"Hush!" interrupted Lady Churchill, in the language which had been the medium of their dialogue. "At least, you need not risk others if you will not endanger yourself. Do you mean to say that you will not consent to take part in the simple plot, or rather plan, which I have arranged? It could not be anything very alarming for a lady to visit you and then be driven in your carriage to the water side, from which you could return without farther delay."

"Yes, and perhaps be arrested on the spot or have the house searched and servants examined and my husband and child compromised," said the lady, scornfully. "No, I grieve much for these troubles, and I cannot see why people cannot be quiet and let other people be in possession. But I have not worse, I cannot do it. I should infallibly ruin all if I attempted it," she went on, gaining courage perhaps by the very denial and by the contemptuous expression that came to the fine features of Sarah Churchill.

"I am to take this as your final answer then, Isadora—is it so?" she returned, firmly. "Will you not take time to consider such a reply? Think well what you are doing. Prestige, a monarch's thanks, the remembrance of a noble deed, and, it may be, a rich reward for yourself or for Viola in future times."

"Oh, that explains your singular conduct, Sarah," replied Lady Lisle. "I could scarcely comprehend why you, who certainly are no very warm adherent and admirer of the personage in question, why you should be so zealous in her service."

"Perhaps," said Lady Churchill, coolly. "It is useless to enter into what you might perhaps find unintelligible, Isadora, but my desire is to prevent a dark deed and save those to whom I owe allegiance and gratitude. Remember there are others nearly related to these unfortunate ones who will thank me or you either for such services, and for their sake, especially for one who has ever honoured me by her favour, I will accomplish the deed or perish."

And the Lady Churchill looked as if she might lead a forlorn hope at that moment.

"It is all very well for you, who have such wonderful nerves, Sarah, to go on these enterprises," returned Lady Lisle. "They are not for me, who am but a very woman, and have more regard for my little Viola than to lose fame, rank and fortune while she is but a blossoming flower. Is she not lovely, Sarah?" she continued, directing her friend's attention to her young daughter as she spoke.

"Yes, I suppose so. I am no prophetess to say what she or any one of us may become in the next dozen years," replied Lady Churchill, coolly, then, turning to Winifred Wynne, who had kept a hushed silence or spoken in low murmurs at her companion during the dialogue, she said, "It is time for us to depart, Winifred. Ring the bell to see if my coach is at the door. You will excuse my taking such freedom here, but I do not wish to compromise you, even by your being concerned in my leaving your house."

"But she shall not go. I will keep Winifred; I want her to stay," exclaimed Viola, imperiously.

"I have employment for her elsewhere, Viola," returned Lady Churchill, resolutely, taking her god-daughter's hand and leading her to the door. "And if you have need of some one to explain your prints it were as well for you to take the same labour as your little friend, and then dispense with her services as well as some others; they cannot be relied upon or bought."

And with this parting shot the proud lady, who had so distinguished a career before her, though as her friend said it would have been impossible to predict the events that raised her to such distinction, took a stately leave of the fair hostess, and walked majestically from the room and the house.

The little Winifred followed her in thoughtful silence, and took her place respectfully in the back of the roomy coach, that if more splendid was certainly far less elegant and convenient than the carriages of modern days.

It was some minutes before either of the singularly assorted pair spoke.

And Winifred at length timidly broke the silence.

"May I speak? Will you please listen, my lady?" she said, in her soft, clear bell-tones, wonderfully unlike the usual accents of the child's treble voice belonging to such tender years.

"Yes, child, if you do not say folly or speak much," was the abrupt reply, that was not very encouraging to an humble, faithful protégée.

But there was a bravery in that quiet, still child breast that could dare anything for the right.

"You were sorry, my lady. You wished to help

some one, and the Lady Lisle refused. Is it not what you and she said just now?"

Lady Churchill started. "How do you know? What prying is this, child? You will go and tattle about it to show your wit, I suppose, next," she exclaimed, in perhaps more affected than real anger, though her flashing eyes literally burnt on the young creature's pale cheeks.

"I would like sooner," came firm and strong from the child's lips.

It was a re-echo perhaps of words that were remembered in after ages—words spoken by one of royal blood, but of as tender years as the protégée of Sarah, Lady Churchill—and they came on the ears of the stern lady as strikingly as the reply of the child son of Charles I. the Duke of Gloucester, on the deposed monarch's last hour.

"It is not ill said, Winifred, but much depends on the way such promises are kept," rejoined the Lady Churchill, sternly. "How can I trust you, Winifred? I had no idea that you could comprehend the tongue in which we speak. How was it that you thus deceived me, petite?"

"I did not, dear lady, I did not," rejoined the girl, eagerly. "How should I foresee that you would converse with the Lady Lisle in a language which I have learnt from the man who came to my father's shop with merchandise? But when I heard that you pleaded for some one in danger and grief, when I saw you were vexed and angry, I could not help it. My lady, please forgive me, and if I can do anything to help, tell me—I will not be afraid. I will not fail," she went on, proudly.

Lady Churchill looked fixedly at the child's face that had such remarkable womanhood mingled with its simplicity.

"Did you know what the lady was for whom I asked help, Winifred?" she inquired, sternly.

Again an ingenuous blush dyed the usually pale cheeks of the girl and gave them a newer beauty.

"I do not know; please do not tell me," she said, falteringly.

"Ah! you are afraid—you do not want to know for fear," said Lady Churchill, laughing contemptuously. "I am not surprised; but it is a proof you cannot be trusted, child."

"Yes, I am afraid; but not for myself. Only if I can speak truth and say I do not know it will be best," replied Winifred, quietly.

"True, and if I employed you would you not be bound to tell your father and mother? And then it would travel all round, and we should be—well it matters not. Hold your tongue, child, that is all I wish," she added, in an impatient tone.

"And I cannot do anything? Am I too little to trust you, my lady?" pleaded the little creature, earnestly.

Lady Churchill's eyes moistened at the candid and unfinished gaze of those large, speaking orbs that had indeed at once womanly thought and childish brightness in their rare beauty.

"Suppose what I wished you to do were to be kept secret, that you were not to tell it even to your father and mother, what then?" she asked, searchingly.

"You are my godmother, you could not tell me to do what was wrong," said the child, gravely. "And you must know better than I do whether it is right."

"You must trust me then, Winifred, even as a babe you would give me your hand to follow me in the dark," she said, with a broken emotion in her voice.

"Yes," was the firm, still reply, "only tell me—I think I can guess—that you are going to save some poor lady. That must be good."

"Good! ay, a noble deed, for which you and I may be blessed in after years," returned the lady, eagerly. "But of that I will not speak more. I could not spoil your simple trust, fair child. Let all the weight be on my shoulders; it is but for you to obey my word. And first I must think and act and plan, and you must keep strict silence, till I bid you carry out your promise. Will you do this, Winifred?" she asked, with one of her searching looks.

"Yes, my lady, that is very easy," replied the child, "certainly."

"Very well then; I shall at once send word to your parents that you shall find shelter with me till I see cause to return you to their roof, and that I will take care your learning does not suffer in the meantime. They will not refuse me," she added, a softer look coming in her sharp-cut features.

"No, they are all honour and duty to you, my lady; they always teach me it is your right," was the quiet reply.

And in a few minutes the coach stopped at the Lady Churchill's residence near the Strand, albeit the mansion itself was so secreted in the midst of thickly wooded arches that it would be impossible for any modern topographer to comprehend and fix its site amidst the labyrinth of streets that cover

the space where many a lovely mansion then stood.

There the Lady Churchill at once repaired to her own private apartments, and Winifred quietly went to the housekeeper's rooms, which was her frequent resort during the rare visits with which she was honoured at her noble godmother's residence.

"Ah, child, so you are going to stay, is it so?" asked the elderly dame who filled the office of housekeeper in the lovely mansion. "Well, it's all right I suppose, for my lady is not one to take fancies. Still, it's enough to put unwise thoughts in your head, and when my lady has children of her own it will, mayhap, be all different and lead to trouble for you, if not for herself."

"I do not wish it. I am quite ready to go home; I like it best," said the child, jealously. "Only if my lady wished it I must stay."

"Against your pleasure?" questioned the woman, sharply.

"No," said Winifred, with a little child dignity that had something almost belittling in it. "I am content. My lady knows best, she is my godmother, Mistress Franks, and I will obey her if I can."

"Yes, if you can—that's what we all say," said Mistress Franks, contentedly; "and then find good cause why we can't. Well, well, you're almost too young for these tricks, child, and Heaven keep you from learning them when you're old, only my mind misgives me that you're being transplanted, like a mountain daisy, to a hot-house, and that you may wither and die, whereas in your own birthplace you'd have blown sweet and beautiful. But dear, dear, I'm an old stupid to meddle where my lady has chosen to speak her bidding, and I think only to burn my fingers and to teach what when it's hot where she is concerned."

And Mrs. Franks buried herself once more in the depths of the preserving-jar and still where fruits and sweets were waiting for her skilled hands to turn their virtues to account.

CHAPTER II.

What is the noise? That which places
Truth in the sublimated cell,
Leaving steps, like cloud-towers,
That march and melt away still.
For sheen's scorn's malignant glances
Prove him poorest of his clan,
He's the noble who advances
Freedom and the name of man!

"Where, where is Winifred?" asked Gervase Wynne, a substantial citizen of London city, whose dealings were chiefly in the precious metals, and with the French and Flemings, to whom his only child had yielded in her expatriation with Lady Churchill.

The Mistress Wynne was a fair, though quiet and unpretending matron, of somewhat higher extraction than her husband, albeit as a penniless orphan she had most thankfully accepted the hand and home of the well-to-do silversmith, and in the main had led a life of comfort and peace since the marriage.

The Lady Churchill had come for Winifred. She called in her own coach, and said she would send her back either to-night or on the morrow; she replied rather timidly, for she fancied that there was a cloud on her husband's brow.

"Humph, I like not so much time spent in the child's life with those above her in station. It puts wrong ideas in her head, and makes her discontented and unfit for her home," returned Master Wynne, gravely.

"Nay, husband, I never saw any traces of such feelings in our child," pleaded Mistress Wynne. "And, besides, as Lady Churchill is her godmother and my blood relation, some way off perhaps, it is scarcely so out of the way as it might be in others."

Master Gervase Wynne shook his head reprovingly.

"Tush, good wife, I have found thee ever a kind and obedient helpmate, and never forward to talk of thy grand relations, who certainly was never of much account to thee, but if thou wouldst please me, and do me good service, thou wilt check all this fancy to raise her above it and at last to look down on her father and mother, while she herself is scorned by her grand friends as the goldsmith's daughter. It will not answer, good wife; it is contrary to my views for Winifred."

Mistress Wynne was silent for a few minutes, she had no talent for arguing and resisting the will of her liege lord, but still she was a fond mother and endowed with a sprinkling of aristocratic blood in her veins.

"It would be unbecoming to go counter to your wishes, dear husband," she remarked, gently, as a more propitious smile on her husband's lips gave her courage.

"Still I cannot help putting before thee the great good which the Lady Churchill may do to our child. She is clever and powerful, and will never train her otherwise than as a girl of modesty and virtue should be brought up; and who can tell but that she may be a protector and a benefactor in a time of need?"

"Wrong there, my wife. It will be a hard matter if I do not take care that our Winifred shall have a sufficient dowry for her station. And as to a protector, I have already taken thought for that also. I know full well that life is uncertain for us all, good wife; I so wish to arrange that Winifred may never be left helpless and friendless; and, besides that, she shall be saved from fortune-hunting and heartless swindlers. So I have fixed upon her future husband, so far as such long interval may permit before she can be a wife, and the father of the youth is of the same station and way of thinking as myself. He is therefore suited for our child."

Mistress Wynne looked startled at the announcement.

"Why, Gervase! husband!" she exclaimed, quickly. "Winifred is not yet ten years old. It is long tempting Providence to arrange any such matters for her, when we know not what may happen in the meantime. To my idea," she added, "it is quite early enough for a maiden to wed at eighteen, and no harm if it is even later than that. Trouble comes soon enough to us all."

"Well, we will hope matrimony is not another name for misery, good Dora," said the goldsmith, with a dry humour in his tone that was his nearest approach to a jest. "But for the rest you surely forget that there can be no more harm in planning for our daughter's marriage some seven or eight years hence than in saving money for her which she might not live to enjoy. Don't you see that, wife mine?"

"Scarcely, Gervase, scarcely," returned the matron, doubtfully. "Hearts and happiness are not to be managed like your gold and silver; and while you could dispose of your money, if our dear child were taken from us, you cannot sincerely persuade the young creatures to care for one another as man and wife should."

Master Wynne's brow somewhat lowered at the words.

Still his wife was far too gentle and submissive, as a rule, for him to venture on a harsh and unreasonable attack on the rare argumentative style of her remonstrance.

"Trust me, Dora," he said, gravely, but still in a kindly tone, that reassured her as to any displeasure she might have excited. "Trust me, I will watch over Winifred so carefully that there shall be little danger of her refusing to carry out my plans for her good. And if the youth in question should fail in the qualities I believe him to possess, I will myself be the first to break the bond."

"But who is he? May I not know that much?" asked the anxious mother, timidly.

"Adrian Meister, the son of the Dutch merchant of Eastcheap," returned Gervase. "He will have his father's business, and a heavy bag of money into the bargain. Our neighbour is a good Protestant, and not over well affected to the present family; albeit, he has a loyal reverence for his own stadtholder, William of Orange, the husband of our Princess Mary. Thus, you see, there is everything to make the choice desirable in our eye, and the worthy man himself is all anxiety for the marriage."

Mistress Wynne was dumb for the moment. She knew the father and son well, though till now their peculiarities had never occasioned more than a passing comment in her mind.

But now it was far different. She thought, with dismay, of the plegmatic, money-getting father—John Meister, of Rotterdam—and the square-built, cold-mannered, awkward lad, the redoubtable Adrian himself, who was thus coldly destined for her fair, graceful, delicate child.

True her own marriage had been in a measure one of convenience, and her tastes and habits were somewhat crushed and outraged by her husband's manner and views. But then she had been tossed about in the world as a penniless orphan, and had learnt patience and even grateful contentment with her lot.

It was different with the cherished, well-dowered daughter of the goldsmith, and more especially since the choice would be denied her, and her hand given away without any free will or wish of her own.

"Dear husband, forgive me; I have never to my belief resisted any command or will of yours," she said, earnestly; "but in this case I must be bold, and entreat your patience if I differ altogether from you. I doubt really—may, I am miserably convinced—that this plan of yours will destroy our child's happiness. True," she added, eagerly, "Adrian is the son of a respectable and worthy man, and the youth himself has perhaps no vice or evil in him. But he is not one to win a maiden's heart nor cherish her as Winifred should be cherished by her husband. And why this haste? Our daughter has our care, she will have a sufficient dower—in addition to her own sweet nature and pleasant looks—to command such a match as may satisfy us all. Wait till she is fully grown, and then let us look out for such a suitor as may be fitting in your eye and hers."

Gervase Wynne had listened with marvellous patience to his wife's eager, earnest pleading, and when she had finished his reply was at once calm and determined, so as to crush every glimmer of hope.

"I have heard you, Dora, because you had a claim perhaps to speak as our child's mother and you have ever shown obedience and faithful truth in our married life. But my mind is made up. No worthless spendthrift among the young hangers-on of a degraded court shall ever ruin my child's peace; nor at her plebeian father's, nor waste my substance; and though I do not wish any hints to be given to Winifred till she shall be of sufficient age to comprehend and to obey, you will best show your usual sense and duty by preparing her for the destiny that will be hers as the wife of a worthy, substantial, sober citizen of London and Rotterdam. Now you understand, my wife, and we will not needlessly speak of this again."

Mistress Wynne sighed deeply. But she felt there was no alternative and that she must trust to the chapter of accidents or to the more stable teachings of Providence for the deliverance of her darling from such an unconsoling fate as the bride of the cold, Dutch-descended, ungainly Adrian Meister, who would only look on fair Winifred as one of his goods and chattels and needing about the same degree of tending as the merchandise that would occupy his chief attention and thought.

CHAPTER III.

What win I rain the thing I seek.

A dream, a breath, a flood of fleeting joy?

Who buys a minute's worth to wait a week

Or sells eternity to get a toy?

For one sweet grape who will the wine destroy?

Or what fond beggar but to touch the crown

Would with the sceptre staff be stricken down?

It was on the evening of the same day which witnessed the confidential communications of Gervase Wynne to his wife.

The darkness had drawn in over the busy London town, only lighted in places by the torches that flashed from Sedan chairs and coaches or the hand of an attendant lackey or yet more careful guardian of some well-placed females.

But there were many spots which only the glimmering of watery stars or lights from a dwelling-house window rendered at all visible even to the sharpest and strongest eye.

And near to the Thames, in the streets turning down to its banks, there might be some little guidance from the lights of the boats and ships, which, however, were few and distant from each other on the crooked river which London took for its guide.

It was, however, down one of these narrow streets that a female wrapped up in a thick cloak and hood, that were uncommon among the lower order of that day, and attended by a girl of very tender years, who yet carried an infant in her arms, hurried with eager and uncertain steps.

"Are you sure this is the way?" she whispered in French to the child nurse. "It is so dark, I am cold and frightened."

"Yes, yes, it is right, madam," replied the girl, in a soft voice and singularly pure accent for a foreigner. "I came this way for the light. Follow me. I will go first—I hear some one—and you can retreat if I am spoken to and stopped."

"Brave child, noble girl!" whispered the lady. "Alas, alas! it is not for myself I fear most, but—hush! Do not go if there is danger. You shall not suffer."

As she spoke the voices approached nearer, and the lady drew back into a dark, gloomy archway that could not even be seen through the gloom.

The speakers were apparently two men, and though it was difficult to distinguish their dress in the darkness there was a flashing of something bright that seemed to bespeak some sort of arms at their sides or in their hands.

They evidently either heard or saw the little girl in spite of her light step and small form, and they made a dead stop as they came up to her.

"Halt!" exclaimed a gruff voice, "who goes there? We've need to be careful, after our order, even with women and children, comrade," he said to the burly figure at his side.

"Who are you? Where are you going?" he continued to the girl, as she stood timidly in the path.

"I am taking the baby home to my mother's mistress, please, sir," said the sweet voice of the child that had something irresistibly touching in its cadences.

"And who is she?" asked the man, once more.

"My father is a silversmith. He—he—works in the city," she said, firmly. "But it's mother's good mistress who owns the baby."

"Well, it is no very good father, nor mother neither, that lets you out at this time of night," replied the man; "but we cannot see to every brat who runs about the streets, so I suppose you must go, but, make haste or some one else may not be quite as civil as we are, and don't drop the child as you run alone."

"What could make you question such a small brat as that?" asked his comrade, as the girl ran off.

"Why, it's said the queen was trying to get off, and of course she has got a baby—at least, there's one palmed off as hers. So there's no knowing. But that girl's all right, one may see; she spoke as clear and as firm as a bell. However, there's no time to lose. There's the roll call," he added to himself.

And the soldiers quickened their pace.

In the meanwhile Winifred Wynne, for it was she, turned for a moment till her ears could detect the approach of her companion.

And then the two hurried in silence, as rapidly as fear could instigate or the darkness permit, till at length they reached the river bank, and turned for some hundred yards till they stood on the small jetty that marked the few steps where boats could be landed.

Here there were two muffled figures in the boat, and one suddenly emerged from a sort of crouching position under the shadow of the waiting craft.

"Thank Heaven!" whispered a voice, that brought warm comfort to poor Winifred's chilled heart, "you are safe, madam. All is ready for you. Quick!"

And the man in the boat silently held out his hand and drew the female forward, whilst the person who had spoken took the child from Winifred's weary arms and placed it in those of the departing female.

"Stay," said the lady, in an accent that was evidently accustomed to obedience, "one moment." And rising at some risk in the little vessel she bent forward and pressed her lips on Winifred's as the girl bent forward at her sign.

"Child," she said, "thou art a rare creature, and if Heaven will, thou shalt find a proper sphere and such reward as a queen can bestow. Till then keep this."

She placed a small case in the child's hands as she spoke, and the next moment the muffled oars plunged into the water with their dull splash, and Winifred and the person who had before spoken were left alone.

"Well done, petite; you are brave and true as I thought," whispered Lady Churchill. "Now we shall soon be in safety at home. Not a whisper till we are once more at home."

And the lady took the small hand of the almost exhausted Winifred in hers and proceeded to a spot some hundred yards distant, where a carriage was in waiting, in which the two immediately entered.

It was a small and modest vehicle, all unlike the emblazoned and gorgeous coach in which the Lady Churchill usually appeared in public, and Winifred remembered that a puny and commonly dressed youth sat on the coach box and directed the horse, which drew them at a slow and deliberate pace the short distance which had to be traversed ere they stopped.

Again the Lady Churchill placed her fingers on her lips while the charioteer alighted and threw the reins to a middle-aged man of evidently lower class than the customary domestics of the great, while he himself coolly advanced to the Lady Churchill's side and drew her arm within his and led her towards a house whose blazing lights pointed to the dazzled eye of the little Winifred the warmth for which she longed.

Lady Churchill led her by the disengaged hand towards the mansion to a side door, to which their young conductor applied a key, and a few minutes more the two were reposing within a warm and well-lighted apartment that was familiar enough to the god-daughter of its mistress.

"Thank Heaven all is safe. I will never plunge into such danger again for myself or others, Cecil, never," said the lady, sinking on a well-cushioned couch with a gasping breath that had caused pain in its indulgence.

The youth thus addressed threw off the overcoat of coarse frieze that enveloped his person and displayed a slight, lithe form and a countenance whose sharply cut features and well-shaped head seemed to indicate good birth and breeding as well as intellectual power.

"For shame, madam. It is not like you to be thus faint hearted," he said, cheerily, "and the more especially when such grand interests and such noble service might well fire the heart. Is it not so?" he added, with an admiring glance at Winifred's flushed features all aglow with excitement and expression.

Lady Churchill perhaps caught the looks, at any rate she awoke from the dreamy, enchanted depression by which she had appeared to be entirely overcome.

"You are right, and by 'babes and sucklings' I am reproved," she said, gravely; "but the time will come, Cecil, when you will comprehend better the full extent of the risk that is even yet hanging over all concerned in this affair."

"And if so—why, then it would be welcome," said the youth, proudly. "A fair and unfortunate queen may well demand all devotional sacrifice. But, cousin mine, will you not tell me the name of our coadjutor, or I should rather say the principal actor in this little drama?" and he looked again at Winifred's fair, blushing face.

"It is a young godchild of mine, Cecil, her mother being distantly related to me, but she was an orphan, and she married one of the substantial citizens of London," she replied, in a subdued tone "and it was on that account that I was anxious to engage her in this cause, since it was impossible for her father to be suspected of any weak loyalty to the reigning family. Winifred, my child, you must be exhausted and chilled by this night's exertions, and I would not willingly send you back to your parents in any enfeebled health. You had better go at once to your bed, and bid Abigail give you some hot posset; it will do you no hurt to-night."

Winifred advanced timidly towards the lady. "I will," she said, "only I want you to take this, dear lady, which she gave me. I dare not speak the name," she added, as she placed the case, which Mary of Modena had given her, in Lady Churchill's hands.

Certainly if the brain could retain a photographic impression of features Cecil Vernon would have stamped Winifred Wynne's on his heart, so completely were his eyes riveted on her child's face and form.

Lady Churchill took the small case in her hand, and, opening it carefully, held its contents up to the light which flashed from a large and massive silver candelabra above her head.

"It is a chain and locket, child!" she exclaimed. "One that might well be worn by royalty itself; and by my troth it has Mary's portrait within concealed in the bauble!"

She held it out to Cecil as she spoke, and he, in his turn, examined the elegant, richly chased jewel. "It is indeed a gift worthy of a queen and of the recipient," he said, gallantly, throwing the chain round the fair, slender throat of the girl. "You more than earned it, mademoiselle, and you will know how to value and preserve it."

Winifred shook her head gravely. "No, I cannot," she said. "I should have to tell my mother from whom it came. She would ask me, and I could not tell a falsehood. I will give it you if you like it so much."

Cecil hesitated instinctively, and perhaps might have accepted the trust with a double value, but Lady Churchill quickly interposed.

"Not so, Winifred," she said. "So great a gift is not to be thus easily transferred, and yet you are right in refusing to keep it by a falsehood. Moreover, I will take that responsibility on myself. You can tell your mother that it was given to you by a friend of mine, and with my knowledge. And if she is still unsatisfied you can refer her to me. I shall be much surprised if Dora Wynne make any objections to what I, Sarah Churchill, may sanction," she added, haughtily.

"Thank you, dear lady. It will indeed do me great pleasure to keep it," returned the girl, "and I can take it and look at it when I want to remember this strange night," she added, simply.

"I trust I shall not be forgotten when you do indulge in such thoughts," said Cecil, with half-mocking, half-serious gallantry.

"No, I shall not forget you. I could not when you brought me home," was the naive answer, that brought a half-frown to the youth's smooth brow and a smile to Lady Churchill's lips.

"What nonsense you talk, Cecil; luckily she is only a child, and does not understand such wild badinage," she said, quickly. "There, go to bed, Winifred, sleep well, and dream not."

(To be continued.)

VALUABLE PICTURES.—Here is a true story of a certain earl, now living, who is a miser, and hoards bank-notes. Being at his banker's one day, he happened to take out his pocket-book, in which was a 10,000*l.* Bank of England note. "Why, my lord," said the astonished banker, "are you aware that there are only two other such notes in circulation?" "I ought to be," was the quiet reply, "for I have got them both, framed and glazed, at home."

RELICS OF THE GREAT WAR.—The humane, just, and politic order of the 21st of July, 1874, by which soldiers who served before 1815 were provided with pensions, or with increased rates of pension in suitable cases, has been attended with most beneficial results. No fewer than 371 survivors of the wars before 1815, who had received no pension whatever for their services up to last year, were found out to be alive, and are now able to learn that their country was ignorant, not ungrateful. We may lament the many hundreds—ay, or thousands—who have passed away; but it is some comfort to know that there is

still left to wealthy England the occasion of providing for the worn-out soldiers who fought her battles in the hour of need long ago. There are also more than 850 pensioners who have received an increase to their pensions for services done before 1815. The increase in the annual charge will be not less than 17,000*l.*; but money was never better bestowed.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.—Art and artists have had a splendid windfall. Thirty-four years ago Sir Francis Chantrey, the great sculptor (who was born at Norton, near Sheffield), died, leaving a splendid fortune to be enjoyed by his widow for her life, and at her death to be devoted to the furtherance of art. She lived on to nearly fourscore years and ten, and now at last no less a sum than 100,000*l.* falls into the hands of the Royal Academy, the interest of which (after paying an annuity of 300*l.* to the president of the academy for the time being) is to be spent in advancing sculpture and painting. Thus our academy promises to be one of the most richly endowed in the world. The office of president will be more desirable than ever, and Sir Francis Grant will find this *bonne bouche* some consolation to him in his severe illness.

LIGHTHOUSES.

THE coast line of the great transatlantic republic, from the St. Croix river on the boundary of Maine to the Rio Grande on the Gulf of Mexico, includes a distance of 5,000 miles.

The Pacific coast has a length of about 1,500 miles, the great northern lakes about 3,000 miles, the inland rivers of 700 miles, making a total of more than 10,000 miles.

The following table exhibits a synopsis of what has been accomplished in aid of navigation along these standard lines, by far longer than those of any other nation in the world.

Lighthouses and lighted beacons, 608; lighthouses and lighted beacons finished and lighted during the year ending July 1, 1874, 25; lightships in position, 21; fog signals operated by steam or hot-air engines, 40; day or unlighted beacons, 346; buoys in position, 2,865.

It is not deemed expedient to attempt to introduce the electric light, or that of gas, on account of the complexity and cost of the apparatus. It is intended, however, to adopt any improvements in the lamps of the importance of which the results of photometric experiments give assurance.

The recent introduction of an improved wick has increased the capacity of the lamps of the first order to the amount of a hundred candles. This, however, is at a proportionately increased expense, on account of the oil consumed.

As to fog signals, the coast of no other country is so subject to fogs as that of some parts of the United States. On this account fog signals in many places are almost as necessary as lighthouses. But abundant experience has shown that a sound of sufficient magnitude to become an efficient aid to navigation can only be produced by a large amount of power derived from steam or heated air and applied by means of complex machinery, expensive in first cost and in continued maintenance. Improvements are about to be introduced in regard to the fog signals, which, while they will greatly increase the range to which the sound may be heard, will of necessity increase the cost of their maintenance.

THE RANA OF OODEYPOR.—There died recently in India a native king who ruled a small territory containing less than 1,250,000 inhabitants, but who came of a family of kings beside which the oldest regal families of Europe are as of yesterday. He was the Rana of Oodeypore, and was descended from Rama, who flourished about 3,000 years ago, and in whom, according to Hindoo mythology, Vishnu was incarnate. He was regarded by the Hindoos with a degree of sacred reverence, and possessed some religious authority, which, however, was only exercised to a very limited extent.

THE BOOKS OF 1874.—In the year 1874 there were published in Great Britain 3,351 new books, 961 new editions of older books, and 291 importations from America, making a total of 4,603, or 883 less than in the preceding year. This falling off may be accounted for by the increase in the cost of production. There is a decline of nearly 150 in theological books, but an increase in the number of scientific works and in the books classed under the title "Essays, Belles Lettres, etc." The publications of the year are divided into 14 classes. There are 664 theological works, 478 of them being new books, and not merely new editions nor American importations; of educational, classical, and philological works the numbers are 865 in all, 301 being our new books; of juvenile works the two numbers are 229 and 207; novels, 825 and 516; law, 124 and 71; on politics and trade, 133 and 101; arts, science, and illustrated works,

628 and 421; travels and geographical research, 244 and 178; history, biography, etc., 898 and 205; poetry and the drama, 305 and 223; year books and serials in volumes, 249 and 243; medicine, 135 and 95; belles lettres, essays, monographs, etc., 211 and 159; miscellaneous, including pamphlets, but not sermons, 103 and 93. Of our own 3,351 new books 133 were published in January, 225 in February, 310 in March, 204 in April, 370 in May, 238 in June, 234 in July, 207 in August, 186 in September, 234 in October, 369 in November, 591 in December.

THE FIRE IN THE "WINDSOR CASTLE."

THE "Windsor Castle," a steam packet owned by Messrs. Donald, Currie, and Co., left Dartmouth for Cape Town in October last, with a crew of 90 men and 118 passengers on board, and when two days out, in the Bay of Biscay, a fire was discovered in the fore hold. The captain at once steered for Corunna, eighty miles distant, and, ably seconded by his officers and crew, set about the repression of the flames, at the same time getting the boats ready in case it should turn out impossible to save the ship.

Fortunately, the vessel was thoroughly sound, and being constructed in compartments some twenty feet of water was pumped into the portions where the flames were raging. The smoke below was so dense that the men using the hose worked in frequent relays, each party being hauled upon deck nearly stifled, and the carpenter, who had to cut a hole in the ship's side, was thrice drawn up from the hold to breathe, before he could complete the task. Every one worked willingly and with cool confidence, and the passengers, after the first few moments of natural alarm, kept quietly to their own quarters and calmly awaited the issue. Still the fire burnt on, and when Corunna was reached, after six hours' steaming, and abundant aid was rendered by those on shore, it took forty-eight hours longer to subdue the flames.

The danger over, it was rightly determined to abandon the voyage through the tropics. The ship returned to London, discharged her damaged cargo, and after refitting started again for the Cape, not one of her former passengers declining to sail in her, and all the crew, except two, answering to the roll-call. This voyage was made without mishap, and when the vessel lay in dock at Poplar on her return a number of gentlemen met on board to witness the presentation of very valuable gold watches to Capt. Howson, Mr. Christie, the chief officer, Mr. Morrison, the chief engineer, and the brave carpenter, William Mackay, awarded to them by the Board of Trade, for their admirable conduct in such a trying emergency, and the distribution of a fund of 500*l.*, subscribed by the owners and under-writers, among the officers and crew.

Mr. Gray, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trade, in making the presentation, spoke highly of the cool courage and discipline of all concerned, very properly singling out the carpenter for especial commendation. With all this we cordially agree, but we cannot see why the pluckiness of the British sailor should engender in Mr. Gray's mind any doubts of the usefulness or necessity of the *Filmsoil* agitation. Of what avail would have been the courage and discipline of Captain Howson and crew had the "Windsor Castle" been an overloaded and ill-found vessel, with only boats enough for a third of those on board? How could the flames have been kept under for six hours had she not been built in compartments? and what could mere pluck have done if, instead of catching fire, the ship had suddenly foundered like the "La Plata"?

Let us by all means do what we can to encourage good seamanship in our mercantile navy, and the greater and more noble qualities our sailors exhibit the more care should we take that their precious lives are not exposed to preventable dangers. The unavoidable risks to which "those who go down to the sea in ships" are exposed are great enough and numerous enough in all conscience without any of those gratuitous additions which result from the inordinate greed of persons who care little for the sacrifice of human life so long as their insurance policies cover pecuniary losses.

OLD CRICKETERS.—Lord Iindsay recently ascertained that of the eleven members of the Rosie Cricket Club who played a match in which he took part forty years ago, ten, including himself, are still alive. It is very rarely that ten persons who met forty years since could still meet again.

EGGS FROM HENS' EGGS.—Extraordinary stories are told of the healing properties of a new oil made from the yolk of hens' eggs. The eggs are first boiled hard, the yolks are then removed, crushed, and placed over a fire, where they are carefully stirred until the whole substance is just on the point of catching fire, when the oil separates and may be poured off. It is used for cuts, bruises, and scratches.



LOVE'S CHRISTMAS.

BY
CHARLES GARVIE,

AUTHOR OF

"Christmas Before and Behind the Curtain," etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

He buys an empty casket, from which
The jewels rare are rifed, who takes
A woman's hand without her heart.

The snow had gone. Winter had given place to spring.

In place of hoar frost and east winds soft dews spangled the fields with diamonds and gentle breezes waved the buds and blossoms.

Town was full; the country was deserted.

Down at Heavithorne both the Hut and the Vale were shut up and silent, and the deer rambled fearfully round each, and couched upon the paths which Louis Felton and his love Stella, who had driven him from her presence, had walked side by side and heart to heart.

That same Stella—the same and yet not the same, if internal change counts for anything—was in London, again the belle of society, and again pledged to marry the wealthy and powerful Sir Richard Wildfang!

Changed indeed was Stella!

Those who had in the previous season deemed her proud now declared that her hauteur was unbearable, and Mrs. Newton, the wily mother who had succeeded in selling her daughter to the best advantage, was not excepted from the quiet, unexpressed scorn with which the beautiful girl seemed to regard men and women alike.

With scrupulous consistency Stella went through her round of duty, neglecting nothing and pleading no weariness.

Balls, concerts, picture-galleries, she was present at all, always under the guardianship and in the possession of Sir Richard Wildfang.

So little was her face the index of her feelings that Sir Richard himself, as acute a reader of faces as any on the habitable globe, was puzzled and perplexed by it.

Had she forgotten that moonlight night when he had thwarted the foolish idiot of a sculptor?—for so Sir Richard always designated Louis Felton in his thoughts—or did she still remember and cherish a secret regret and remorse?

If Sir Richard could not decipher the calm, self-possessed face of his bride elect, all the rest of the world must of necessity fail.

As for Sir Richard himself, he was calmer, more placidly self-satisfied than ever.

[HATED ATTENTIONS.]

Round him, in the commercial world, well-known firms and houses once of high repute tottered and fell, but the house of Wildfang and Co. stood unshaken, looking down like a Colossus or a Sphinx at the crumbling ruins of fair fames and high names which were strewn at its feet.

The world looked on and bowed down to his wisdom and sagacity with more admiring suppleness than ever, and new companies toiled, schemed and diplomatized to obtain his name upon their prospectuses.

Perhaps Mr. Dawlap, the confidential manager, could have undecieved the world, and stripped the feathers from the golden owl, but Mr. Dawlap was the discreetest of his class, and looked on with closed lips and meditative eyes, while he watched the world fall down at the feet of his master and worship.

There were some keen-sighted men who said that the immense weight of business which Sir Richard's shoulders supported was telling upon him; that his face had at times a slightly weary and overwatchful expression, and that the smile, which, ever as of old, sat upon his face as a sunbeam rests upon ice on a cold January morning, was a trifle, a trifle only, overstrained.

"But what wonder if it should be so?" they exclaimed, in chorus, and the little signs of thought and calculation only added to his popularity.

No man is a hero to his valet, and perhaps Sir Richard's could, like Mr. Dawlap, have played the part of iconoclast.

He might have told of sleepless nights, of measured paces across the luxurious bedchamber, of startings from sleep and mutterings of a woman's name—Lucy!—of the violent groan with which his master—half asleep—greeted his appearance one morning, and the wild words:

"Take the child away!"

But the valet was as discreet as Mr. Dawlap, took his wages, dressed his master to perfection, and—most valuable service of all—held his tongue.

And Louis Felton—where was he?

Ask it of the wilds of Corsica, the plains of Nevada, of any of the out-of-the-way places of the uncivilized globe, and they could answer better than the fashionable world of London, which knew him not when he was in its midst, and knew not whether he had gone now that he had departed.

The man Stephen Hargrave had also disappeared.

There was a report in Heavithorne that a face and form like his had been seen passing through the village on a cold, slooty night; but the report was only partially credited and the majority of the good, simple folks firmly believed that he had delivered himself up to the malignant power to whom, in pursu-

ance of a long-standing treaty, he was due; and they would have let him slip from their memory even more quickly had his name not been useful in scaring disobedient children.

To tell a wifely child in Heavithorne that Stephen Hargrave was coming to eat him if he did not reform produced a marked improvement in his behaviour.

So the spring wore on to summer, and one morning Mrs. Newton, entering the breakfast room, which was flooded with the June sunlight, sighed mentally and, glancing at Stella, who sat toying with a scrap of toast too small to satisfy the hunger of a London sparrow, said:

"The heat is unendurable already; what will it be in another month's time? I really think we'd better go down to the Vale."

Stella looked up, and across her face there flashed a sharp spasm of pain, just such a fleeting look as touches the face of a man who has endured a blow upon an unhealed wound.

"To the Vale?" she said, listlessly relapsing into her old attitude of meditation.

"Yes; have you any objection to urge? You generally have; or, if you haven't, you look as if you had."

"I have no objection. I do not wish to go, but that is not an objection tangible enough to prevent us," said Stella, in calmly measured tones of the most profound indifference.

"Exactly," retorted Mrs. Newton, with greater irritation, and an infusion of complaint in her tone. "That is what I complain of. You appear to care for nothing. You go here and you go there as if you had no life in you nor choice in the matter. When Richard—"

Mrs. Newton always spoke of Sir Richard as "Richard," familiarly and proudly.

Stella scarcely ever mentioned his name, but if she did she always gave him his title.

"When Sir Richard proposed that we should go to Normandy, and actually promised to join us for a little time if he could, you appeared as insensible of his kindness as if he had not suggested the movement."

"I am very sorry," said Stella. "I did not object to go to Normandy."

"No, but you looked so indifferent that Richard immediately recommended us to remain in town. I am sure you might show some interest in—matters when he is so extremely—so ridiculously—kind."

"Sir Richard is very kind," said Stella, coldly, "and I am always ready to accede to any request of his or yours, mamma. If you wish me to go down to the Vale I will go—willingly."

"And cheerfully!" added Mrs. Newton, with an ironical toss of her head. "Stella, I do not know what has come to you. I think it is wicked when one has been so fortunate—so wonderfully fortunate, I may say—as you have been, to go about as if you were repining at your lot. You have been fortunate too! It is my great consolation to think that I have so managed to secure your happiness. And you ought to be grateful. It was all my management."

"Not altogether," said Stella, with a smile at once strange and bitter.

"Well, I don't know how much you conduces to the result," said Mrs. Newton. "If it had not been for me, a sensible, affectionate parent, you might"—and she shuddered with ineffable contempt and horror—"have been married or engaged to some poverty-stricken younger son, or one of those new men that one meets in society, artists and authors and that sort of people, dreadfully ill-bred and fearfully poor. Why, look at that sculptor man—that Louis Felton—"

It was the first time Louis's name had been mentioned in Stella's hearing since that never-to-be-forgotten night.

She rose, calm still, but fearfully pale, and moved towards the door, saying, without looking round:

"I will get ready to go with you to Madame Cerise, mamma."

And so left the room before the cruel, contemptuous sentence could be finished.

As she re-entered, dressed for the drive, a footman announced Sir Richard.

Mrs. Newton advanced, all smiles and gushing welcome.

"My dear Richard!" she exclaimed, extending her hand with empressment, "how good of you to look in upon us so early, and you so busy too! Stella will be so delighted; she has gone upstairs to get ready for a drive. Oh, here she is!" she continued, as Stella, looking anything but "so delighted," came forward.

Sir Richard bent over her extended hand, and pressed his lips to it—the warmest caress he had ever dared to bestow.

"I shall not keep you," he said. "You are quite right in getting out before the heat of noon. I came in to ask you if I could do anything for you at Heavithorne?"

"Are you going down there?" asked Mrs. Newton.

Stella had not spoken.

"Yes," he said. "I am going down to the Box to-morrow for some papers I left there, and shall remain all night; so that if I can be of any service—"

"N—o, thank you, dear Richard," said Mrs. Newton. "I don't think there is anything you can do for us, is there, Stella?"

"Nothing for me," said Stella, quietly.

She had taken her seat at a little distance, and was sitting, looking out of the window, lost in thought.

"Then I will go," said Sir Richard.

And he went towards the window with his hand outstretched.

Mrs. Newton turned to go out of the room, not to be in the way, as she would have expressed it, but their parting was no more affectionate than their meeting, indeed it was not their last word, for Sir Richard, as he shook hands with Mrs. Newton, said suddenly, and as if he had barely remembered it:

"By the way, I have come—like a tax-collector—for a short call on business. I want your signature to a small document, my dear madam."

Mrs. Newton smiled to express her willingness to sign anything in obedience to Sir Richard's mandate.

"What is it, my dear Richard?"

"A memorandum—a mere form—authorizing Lord Marmion to make a transfer of money to me—a matter of business—dear Stella's. I am afraid you would not understand it if I endeavoured to explain it. I may say, though, that Stella's income will be increased some eight hundred a year by it."

And he smiled benevolently and affectionately over at Stella, who had relapsed into her cold impassibility.

"How very kind of you!" exclaimed Mrs. Newton. "Dear Richard, you are always so thoughtful. Stella, do you hear what Richard has done for you?"

"No," said Stella, rising, and advancing to the table.

Sir Richard explained—if the broken statement could be called an explanation—over again, and Stella smiled wearily.

She hated the money, every dole of it.

Had it not tempted a once noble heart—for she could not believe it to have been always vile—to dishonour?

"Indeed," she said, "it is very kind of you, but I am afraid you have taken more trouble than the results will repay. I have more money than I want. I do not see the use of eight hundred a year more."

Sir Richard smiled, as much as to say: "Noble, high-minded, girl!" But smiled at Mrs. Newton more wily.

"Eight hundred is worth having though, and I shall save this to you by taking charge of the money. I have so many ways of investing it. But I must not keep you, I am quite anxious for you to get into the air; so, will you sign?" And he spread out a paper on the table.

Mrs. Newton took up the pen, and, absolutely without glancing at the matter under which she was about to put her name, was commencing to write when Sir Richard stopped her.

"My dear madam," he said, shaking his head with a grave, reproachful smile; "never sign a paper without knowing what you attest! Read it, please."

Mrs. Newton pouted.

"How ridiculous—as if it mattered. Well, I have read it, and I am none the wiser. There!" and she wrote her name.

Sir Richard carefully blotted the line, folded the paper, and replaced it in his pocket-book, then, as the ladies were quite ready and the carriage waiting, he placed them in their seats, and waited on the pavement with his hat raised until they had been driven off.

Then he turned and made, with his quick, firm step, for his own house.

Though it was very hot outside, it was deliciously cool in Sir Richard's private counting-house, with its green blinds and improved patent ventilators, and it was with quite a feeling of relief that the great man seated himself at his table. It was with an expression which signified a more intense satisfaction that he took the paper Mrs. Newton had signed from his pocket and spread it out before him; and the expression lasted some minutes, indeed until a knock at the door announced a visitor.

It was Mr. Dawlap, grave, sedate, and as respectfully solemn as ever.

Without a word beyond the respectful "Good morning, Sir Richard," he laid a paper upon the table.

Sir Richard took it up, considered it with calm regard for a few minutes, and looked up, with a smile which Mr. Dawlap so little expected that he started.

"It is as bad as that, Dawlap, is it?" he said.

"Well, we have done our best, have we not? You have, I am sure, and so have I. It is a pity, a great pity! We shall drag a great many down with us, for we have won confidence during the panic, and a lot of money is in our hands. A great pity! But it is inevitable, and a mere question of time. How long shall we say?"

"A month, two—it all depends, Sir Richard," replied the managing man, with resigned sorrow.

"It all depends, as you say," said Sir Richard, with a strange smile. "Well, I can depend upon you; you will keep quiet?"

"As the grave," said Mr. Dawlap.

"Thank you, said Sir Richard, and—wonderful condescension!—he held out his fine, white hand.

Mr. Dawlap, justly sensible of such amiability, grasped it respectfully, and, as Sir Richard gave him a friendly but perfectly calm "good morning," took his departure.

Scarcely had he gone than a servant announced Lord Marmion.

"My dear fellow! how do you do!" exclaimed the young man. "Here I am again—on business too, but for the last time I hope! I have come to wind up the matter, and have brought the cash. You wanted it in good metal and paper, you know!" and he laughed a trusting, light-hearted laugh in which Sir Richard joined with open-hearted mirth.

"Here is the paper," he said, taking up the memorandum which Mrs. Newton had signed. "It was scarcely necessary, but still with such a large amount every form should be used."

"All right," said Lord Marmion. "My man is outside—shall I call him?" And, without waiting for an answer, he called to some one who was waiting outside the door.

A clerk—either a banker's or a lawyer's—entered and placed a bag upon the table.

Sir Richard offered him a glass, which he drank with great respect, and then was ushered out.

"There's the money," said Lord Marmion. "A great sum, Wildfang!"

"It is, and a great treat!"

"Yes, but not too great for a future husband, you know," said his lordship, laughing.

And again Sir Richard joined in.

Then he seated himself at the table, and wrote out an acknowledgment.

"Another form," he said, handing it to Lord Marmion. "Take care of it."

"I will," said his lordship. "I feel quite like a business man. Now give me a glass of wine, and I'll trot off. I'm going to Richmond—will you come? A little water party."

"No, thanks," replied Sir Richard, toying as he spoke with the paper which Mr. Dawlap had left. "I am going down to Heavithorne to-morrow, and I must be busy to-night."

"Oh, you business men! You are wonderful people," said his lordship, as he drank his sherry. "Well, good-bye. How much do you think Stella will get a year by this transaction?"

"About eight hundred pounds—more or less," said Sir Richard, as he shook hands.

Then, with another genial, hearty good-bye, the young lord also departed, and Sir Richard was left alone.

He looked the door, and, returning to the table, looked down at the bag with a smile deep and profound.

Then he took up the bag, and opening it turned out a mass of bank-notes and coin.

With the same smile he set to work and counted out the whole—to the last sovereign—then replaced it in the bag and walked with it to a safe at the end of the room.

He unlocked the safe, carefully deposited the bag in a remote corner, and looked at it with the same smile of satisfaction.

"A nest egg," he said, at last.

Then he closed the safe slowly, and as slowly locked it.

The nest egg was Stella's fortune!

CHAPTER XXIV.

My new-born lamb, my son!

Oh, that the angels did not meet thee
In the celestial city but for another sun
son yet

Would let thee shine on earth!

Two summer which glorified Grosvenor Square and Park Lane brightened in some degree the squalor of Paradise Alley.

No. 2, in especial, looked all the better for it, and the gentry did its best to prove its masculine gender by clanking recklessly whenever a straggling sunbeam shone across the base of its dingy brass cage.

The months which had brought growth to the year had also done something in the way of enlargement for Sam Groat's Christmas Snowdrop; and as Sam was wont to declare to any one—or no one if he happened to be alone—the little fellow promised, if fate were kind, to be a man.

If fate proved kind?

Something in the shape of improvement had fallen upon Sam himself in the six months which had elapsed since that merry Christmas Eve, and the cause was palpable.

There was less of ruggedness in his grim, wrinkled face and less of dirt upon the hands.

The hunchback's voice, which a neighbour had once likened to a hardy-gurdy out of tune, was softened and toned down to a kindly growl, which at times rose to a chuckling falsetto, and about the whole of the distorted, misshapen figure had grown a something at variance with the old, reckless untidiness, and a marked sign of change of an object in life.

There was not much poetry in Paradise Alley. It was not a locality favourable to the full development of the finer sensibilities; but few of the dwellers in the dark, dirty, squalid corner but felt a touch of something like sympathy when they saw old Sam trudge out with his precious child in his bosom or hanging on to his hand, and throughout the alley from end to end there was not one who would have dared to look early at the mite while his hunchback guardian was near to see it.

And they saw him only when he was out. Had they seen him at home, lighting up the little room—as he lit up the old man's heart—playing about the grotesque figure as it bent over its work; had they heard his prattle, and the lively falsetto which it provoked from Sam, the Paradise Alleyites might have been all the better for it, and perhaps—who knows? for example is more effective than precept—have loved their own little ones more heartily.

Yes, Sam had an object in life—a something to live for, but it made his life not only sweet to him but awful!

Often, as the old man sat looking at the child as it played beside him, or sat at his knees with its golden head resting peacefully against the hard, labour-stained waistcoat, he would think:

"If I was to die! Ah! what would become of him?"

And he would snatch the precious blessing to his heart and wipe away—well, a speck of leather dust which had fallen in his eye.

They were all the world to each other.

And it had occurred to Sam that his Snowdrop might feel the want of childish companionship, and his heart smote him so fully that it nerved him to speak.

"Snow," he said, falteringly, in that strange style, half-mature and half-infantile, in which he always addressed the child, and which the mite seemed to fully understand, "Snow, it occurs to me, quite permissible, that maybe you'd like a playmate or two. If so be as I'm right, I takes it unkind of you not to mention it!" and he shook his head solemnly.

The little fellow climbed up to his knee and fired a pair of bright blue eyes thoughtfully upon the old man's small ones.

"If so be as you should," growled the old man, "why, we'll get a few. You shall have as many as you like; I know there's plenty of 'em in the alley! We'll pick out the cleanest and have a ride spin. Push in boots, hop-scootch, Tom Tiddler's ground, and—all them sort of games. What do you say, Snow?"

"Yes," chirped the little fellow, with a rather doubtful nod, and Sam, smothering a wistful sigh, took him the next morning into the middle of the alley and quietly introduced him in child fashion to a group of mates.

Then he retreated to the window and watched with all his heart in his eyes.

The child played at first shyly, but still with infantile glee, until, in a burst of crowing, he happened to glance at the window and saw old Father Sam's lonely, sorrowful face before the old man could hide it behind the curtain.

In an instant he threw down the ball, and, quitting his companions, toddled painfully up the steps, hammered at the door with his tiny fist, and on Sam's opening it held out his arms to be taken up.

The next morning Sam silently took him out again, but the child's gentle heart had read and fully understood the meaning of the lonely old face at the window, and he hurried to Sam as soon as the hunchback had put him down, and, in his childish treble, said:

"No, pay with old Father Sam."

So Sam bore him back, and mad with delight—which he hid over the old boot he was repairing—was the child's only playmate once more.

Then came the summer, and that heat which Mrs. Newton had declared to be unbearable in her cool drawing-rooms and boudoirs.

In Paradise Alley she would have found a difficulty in discovering some word by which to describe it.

The pavement was hot, the air was stifling, the canopy languished in his cage and gave up all hope of ever proving his wit, and the child—little Snowdrop?—like the snowdrop it began to fade and droop in the heat, and the old man grew terrified when, on one of the hottest days, the little one lay in his arms white and quiet, with a peaceful, listless smile in the eyes turned up lovingly to his.

Tremblingly he pressed the boy to him, calling him by his name in tones that struggled vainly for calm.

"Snowdrop, my little Snowdrop! what's the matter? You—you are not in any pain? Open your eyes and look at old Father Sam! Just one look!"

"Noddy very tired, old father!" he lisped, with a preternaturally grave shake of the head.

"Tired—of course you are," said old Sam, glancing hopelessly at the window, through which the sun was beating upon the curtains. "Every decent person, leave alone a angel child, is tired in such weather. It's only old chaps like myself as keeps up, oddsacious villains as we are!" and, hating his own strength, he shut his teeth hard. "My darling precious will go into the park—"

"No, not the park—no tired of the park," said the child, in a whisper. "Ma stay here and go to sleep." And, nestling closer to the pitiful breast, he closed his eyes.

Old Sam was in mortal terror. What was he to do if the child fell ill?

There had been several deaths of fever in the alley.

Perhaps his Snowdrop!—the thought was too horrible, too appalling, to be endured quietly.

The old man—without his hat, and with his leathern apron still round him—hurried carefully into the street to the nearest doctor's, and, trembling like a leaf, rang a bell.

It was some time before the gentlemanly assistant would admit him, but Sam threatened to admit himself, and force his way, if he were not allowed to enter quietly, and so obtained an audience.

The doctor—an old man, far too used to such sights to feel more than professional sympathy—looked at the child and back at the old man.

"What is it?" asked Sam, hoarsely, almost fiercely. "Can't you speak? What's the use of a doctor if he can't do nothing more'n look at him? I can do that, and I'm an ignorant, coddling old idiot! Do something for him—give him something! I can pay for it—I'm strong—look at me!—and I can work for him. Give him something! Heaven, give him something!"

The doctor laid his hand upon the shaking, misshapen shoulder.

"Hush, my good fellow!" he said. "Do not distress yourself! The child is very ill, but not dying. Medicine—physic is no use. The medicine he wants is fresh air. The country—new milk—buttercups and daisies. You understand?"

Old Sam nodded eagerly, his eyes sparkling with hope.

"I know! I'll take him! I'll cross the sea with him—go anywhere to serve him! Doctor, I can't—I can't let him die!"

And his whisper sank so low that the words were rather breathed than spoken.

"No, no," said the doctor, "don't be afraid, my good man. Take him into the country at once. He is a fine little fellow, but delicate. Not your child, eh? Your daughter's? She was delicate, wasn't she? Exposed to the air, eh?"

The old man nodded with a fearful bitterness.

"Yes," he said, between his shut teeth, "she was delicate! She was exposed to the air." And laying half a sovereign down upon the table he covered the child up in his coat and left the room.

"Take him into the country," he muttered, as he hurried home. "Yes, yes; new milk, flowers! He shall have 'em—he shall have 'em! Old Sam shall get 'em for him! The country—where is the country?"

And he stopped short and looked helplessly round him.

Reader, there are hundreds of the poor who could put the question with perfect seriousness.

Then there flashed upon him the memory of the visit of the gentleman who had spoken so kindly to him and admired his boy.

He had spoken of the country—had asked him to bring him Snowdrop down to see his picture—had left the address!

With fast-beating heart the old man laid the child upon its little bed and searched for the paper.

When he had found it he spent out the address letter by letter, carefully folded the paper, and stuck it in his waistcoat pocket, and with trembling, eager fingers did up his necessaries for the journey in a red pocket-handkerchief.

Then he wrapped up the child tightly, and carefully, and looking the door of the room after him, walked out into the street.

To the first policeman he met he showed the slip of paper, and hungrily listened to his direction how to reach the place named in it; then, walking with the utmost care of the child's comfort, reached the station, and all trembling with love's fear, started for Heavymotus.

It was night when the lodge-keeper—who told the story in the evening in the village ale-house for the remainder of his life—looking up the park-gates, saw a bent, misshapen figure, with something hanging out of the breast of his coat, hurrying down the path; and looking from one side to the other with wistful, eager eyes.

It was Sam, with his precious burden, and he stopped at the gates, and, looking at the keeper with eager eyes, produced the piece of paper, now thumb-marked and tattered.

"Can you tell me where that place is? Quick!"

"Yes," said the man, "you're just in time to save me a trot out of the lodge again. That's the house down yonder. But who do you want?"

"That's my business," retorted the old man, with jealous fierceness.

Then, with a hurried "Thank ye" and a glance at his burden, he hurried on, the moon lighting his path, and shining on his gnarled, wrinkled face as he went.

"Close there now," he murmured, with his head bent down to his breast. "Close there now, Snow! Keep up your heart, my precious! We'll soon be with the kind gentleman! He'll take care o' you! He knows where to get the flowers and new milk. Speak to me, only a word, Snow!—only a word!"

"Father Sam!" murmured the little fellow.

The old man choked back a sob and hurried on faster than ever.

A turn of the path, and he was at the wicket gate.

Another minute and he was through it and standing like a stone—but for the heavy moan of disappointment and despair which burst from the bottom of his heart as his eyes rested upon the lifeless house and the deserted garden.

"Empty?" he moaned. "Gone! Oh, Snow! Snow!"

In his helplessness his head sank upon his breast and he walked on towards the house as if in a dream.

The child put out his little hand and made a peep-hole for itself.

"Pretty! pretty!" he murmured, looking up at the house, upon which the moon was shining brightly. "Oh, father, stop here with Snow!"

Old Sam looked down at him with a trembling lip.

The night was warm, the child well wrapped up. There was no near shelter that he knew of; he might wander all night and find no place for him.

He looked round undecided still until his eyes fell upon a little summer-house in the corner of the shrubbery, and then he decided.

Limping up to it—for he was footsore and lamed by the hot roads—he crawled in, uncovered the child while he gave it a draught of milk from a bottle, and then covering it up again sat silent and motionless with its warm, fragile form pressed to him.

While he sat, looking up at the moon with an in-

audible prayer for the child ever forming itself on his lips, he heard a noise near him, and, looking out, saw a figure closely muffled stealing through the neglected garden.

CHAPTER XXV.

Guilt ever at his footsteps paced
And kept his conscience horrible,
A shadow moved him to the soul
And fear claimed him for its own.

SIR RICHARD, as he had informed Lord Marmion that he should be, was very busy with ledger and day-book that evening, and worked at a strange kind of work—late into the night.

Sir Richard in all his deeds, whether of good or ill—he did some good ones for a far-sighted purpose occasionally—was always calm and gentlemanly.

To-night he was making up false accounts and statements to defraud and mislead clever men; but though the task required the acumen and astuteness of an artful brain, and was of a nature deeply criminal, Sir Richard's face was placidly smooth and the parting of his hair unruined.

Had he been going to commit a murder, he would have set about it with a complete avoidance of excitement, and would have slain his victim in a quiet, graceful, and gentlemanly manner.

In the morning he sallied into the park and chatted with charming affability for so great and wealthy a man with thoughtless young ladies and empty-headed young gentlemen, some of whose money he had that night before been cleverly disposing of in his false account-books; and in the afternoon he started for the Box alone, and carrying a leather bag.

It was a small bag and it did not look particularly heavy as he carried it.

But it was heavy, notwithstanding that he swung it occasionally with a careless "There's nothing in it" sort of air, and never put it out of his hand for a moment, though obsequious porters and servants requested permission to relieve him of it. He still clung to it while he sat in the study of the Box and waited, smoking a cigar and sipping claret, until the night had quite fallen.

And when he stole out by the doorway through which Stephen Hargrave had so often entered, closely muffled, he still had the bag in his hand.

Even when he caught up a spade which was leaning just outside against the step, and hid it under his coat, he still held the bag, and with the bag in his hand he stole along—waiting for intervals of darkness when the clouds obscured the moon—along the unfrequented ways to the Hat.

Arrived there he crossed the garden and entered the shrubbery.

There he stood for awhile listening intently and looking round him with keen and still unexcited eyes.

At last, fully assured that no listener nor spy was near, he drew out his spade, which was sharpened like a turf-cutter's, and neatly cut out a square of turf under the laurels.

This he laid aside carefully and proceeded to dig, working quietly and deftly, like one acquainted with the use of the spade, though in all probability it was the first time he had ever had the tool in his hand.

He worked steadily, pausing occasionally to listen, until a deep hole lay beneath him.

Then he took up the precious bag, lowered it gently and tenderly into its grave, and proceeded to fill in the mould.

When that part of his task was finished he replaced the turf, flattened it with his spade, straightened his back and smiled down at his work accomplished—smiled down as if he could see, through the earth, the bright sovereigns and the crisp notes of Stella's fortune.

In that moment of his rest a slight noise caused him to avert on one side as if a bullet had struck him.

It was the feeble cry of a child.

He looked round and listened with a scared look upon his face, such as it had worn when he had heard a servant at the Vale call "Lady," such as it wore when he woke at nights from his dreams.

Then he smiled, shook his head with a contemptuous frown at his own foolish fancy; but nevertheless set down his spade, and advanced cautiously farther into the shrubbery.

At his first step the moon was obscured, the shrubbery was dark.

A minute after, by the time he had got into the middle of the little plantation, the moon broke forth again, and poured down before him. He raised his eyes as something white seemed to have sprang into his path, and fell back with a guttural cry of horror.

Before him—risen from the grave—were the ghosts of the woman and child who had stood before him that cold, bitter Christmas Eve, when he had spurned them from him with a cruel denial and a crueler mockery of charity!

Yes, horrible to see, there they stood! In the same attitude. The ghost of the woman was holding out to him the ghost of the child.

His face went livid, his eyes seemed to start from their sockets. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth; and that fear which hurls reason from its throne had taken complete possession of his bad, unscrupulous soul.

For a moment the earth span round him in the moonlight, then, with a mighty effort, he turned and fled.

With the speed of a man pursued by the demons of a guilty conscience he tore to the wicket gate, opened it and dashed against something!—something in the shape of a man, deformed enough to add to his terror—something that went down before his guilty flight like a feather!

He stopped for a second, but the next a child's wail broke the stillness, and once more he fled—livid with fear and almost mad.

(To be continued.)

UNHEALTHY PLANTS.

WHENEVER plants begin to drop their leaves it is certain that their health has been injured, either by over-potting, over-watering, over-heating, by too much cold, or by applying such stimulants as guano, or by some other means, having destroyed the fine rootlets by which the plant feeds, and induced disease that may lead to death. The case is not usually important enough to call in a "plant doctor;" so the amateur begins to treat the patient, and the practice is in all probability not unlike that of many of our household physicians who apply a remedy that increases the disease. Having already destroyed the, so to speak, nutritive organs of the plant, the stomach is gorged with food by applying water, or with medicine by applying guano or some patent "plant food."

Now the proper remedy is nearly akin to what is a good one when the animal digestion is deranged—give it no more food until it recovers. We must then, if the roots of the plant have been injured from any of the above-named causes, let the soil in which it is potted become nearly dry; then remove the plant from the pot, take the ball of soil in which the roots have been enveloped, and crush it between the hands just enough to allow all the sour outer crust of the ball of earth to be shaken off; then re-pot in rather dry soil (composed of any fresh soil mixed with equal bulk of leaf mould or street-sweepings), using a new flower-pot, or having thoroughly washed the old one, so that the moisture can freely evaporate through the pores.

Be careful not to overfeed the sick plant. Let the pot be only large enough to admit of not more than an inch of soil between the pot and ball of roots.

After repotting give it water enough to settle the soil, and do not apply any more until the plant has begun to grow, unless indeed the atmosphere is so dry that the moisture has entirely evaporated from the soil; then, of course, water must be given, or the patient may die from the opposite cause—starvation.

The danger to be avoided is in all probability that which brought on the sickness, namely, saturation of the soil by too much water. Other causes may induce sickness to plants, such as an escape of gas in the apartment, or smoke from a flue in the greenhouse; but in all cases, when the leaves fall from a plant, withhold water, and, if there is reason to believe that the soil has been poisoned by gas or soddened with moisture, shake it from the roots as before advised, and repot in a fresh flower pot.

PARISIAN NOVELTY.—Dressmakers in Paris are adopting the system of forwarding to their clients dolls dressed in the latest fashions, as well as in the newest materials, and capital selections are thus made. Tailors, perhaps, may in time come to this.

POWERFUL ARGUMENTS.—Frederick the Great was always very fond of disputation; but as he generally terminated his discussion by collaring his antagonist and kicking his shins, few of his guests were disposed to enter the arena against him. One day he was more than usually disposed for an argument, and asked one of his suite why he did not venture to give his opinion on some particular question. "It is impossible, sire, to express an opinion before a sovereign who has such strong convictions, and who wears such thick boots," was the reply.

THE KING OF HAWAII AND BARNUM.—The King of Hawaii has visited Barnum's Hippodrome in New York, and the immense gathering within the building greeted the King heartily when he entered the auditorium after a few minutes spent before the cages of the animals. The Royal box was in section K of the grand orchestra, on the north side of the auditorium, where the foremost rows of seats had been taken out and elegant arm chairs put in their places. Large Hawaiian and American banners ornamented the front of the boxes. On the King's left hand sat Mr. Barnum, who was very diligent in pointing out to his

Royal guest all the interesting features of the performance. The Oriental gentleman who makes a collation of cold steel was performing his feats. When he had finished and as his car was drawn away, breathing out flame on every side, there was a display of fireworks in the eastern part of the arena. In outlines of fire appeared a seated figure, holding in one hand the scales of justice, while in the other was an olive branch. Beneath, in radiant letters of various hues, appeared the name of "Kalakaua," and on each side was a whirling globe of flame jets. This display called out much applause. The King was enthusiastic concerning the various races, which were hotly contested. Mr. Barnum persuaded the King to get into a carriage with him, and they were driven round the race track. The cheering, hand-clapping, and waving of handkerchiefs which accompanied their progress greatly delighted his Majesty. After Donaldson, the aeronaut, had been presented to the King Mr. Barnum asked his guest if he would not like to make a balloon ascension while in America. The King replied that he would like to do so very much if it would not conflict with the terms of the insurance on his life. Mr. Donaldson stated that it would not, and an effort will be made to take the King up in the large balloon "Barnum" while he is in Boston.

CHINESE ETIQUETTE.

If there is one thing more than another, after the possession of the thirteen classics, on which the Chinese specially pride themselves, it is politeness. Even had their literature alone not sufficed to place them far higher in the scale of mental cultivation than the unlettered barbarian, a knowledge of those important forms and ceremonies which regulate daily intercourse between man and man, unknown of course to inhabitants of the Outside Nations, would have amply justified the graceful and polished Celestial in arrogating to himself the proud position he now occupies with so much satisfaction to himself. A few inquiring natives ask if foreigners have any notions at all of etiquette, and are always surprised in proportion to their ignorance to hear that our ideas of ceremony are fully as clumsy and complicated as their own.

And truly if national greatness may be gauged by the men and carriage of its people, China is without doubt entitled to a high place among the children of men. An official in full costume is a most imposing figure, and carries himself with great dignity and self-possession, albeit he is some four or five inches shorter than an average Englishman. In this respect he owes much to his long dress, which, by the way, we hope in course of time to see modified; but more to a close and patient study of an art now almost monopolized in Europe by aspirants to the triumphs of the stage. There is not a single awkward movement as the Chinese gentleman bows you into his house, or supplies you from his own hand with the cup of tea so necessary, as we shall show, to the harmony of the interview. Not until his guest is seated will the host venture to take up his position on the right hand of the former; and even if in the course of an excited conversation either should raise himself, however slightly, from a sitting posture, it will be the bounden duty of the other to do so too. No gentleman would sit while his equal stood.

Occasionally, where it is not intended to be over-respectful to a visitor, a servant will bring in the tea, one cup in each hand. Then standing before his master and guest, he will cross his arms, serving the latter who is to his right with the left hand, his master with the right. The object of this is to expose the palm—in Chinese, the heart—of either hand to each recipient of tea. It is a token of fidelity and respect. The tea itself is called "guest tea," and is not intended for drinking. It has a more useful mission than that of allaying thirst. Also, for the red-haired barbarian who greedily drinks off his cupful before ten words have been exchanged, and confirms the unfavourable opinion his host already entertains of the manners and customs of the West! And yet a little trouble spent in learning the quaint ceremonies of the Chinese would have gained him much esteem as an enlightened and tolerant man. For while despising us outwardly, the Chinese know well enough that inwardly we despise them, and thus it comes to pass that a voluntary concession on our part to any of their harmless prejudices is always gratefully acknowledged.

To return, "guest tea" is provided to be used as a signal by either party that the interview is at an end. A guest no sooner raises the cup to his lips than a dozen voices shout to his chair coolies; so too when the master of the house is prevented by other engagements from playing any longer the part of host. Without previous warning—unusual except among intimate acquaintances—this tea should never be touched except as a signal for departure.

Strangers meeting may freely ask each other their names, provinces and even prospects; it is not so usual as is generally supposed to inquire a person's age. It is always a compliment to an old man, who is justly proud of his years, and takes the curious form of "your venerable teeth?" but middle-aged men do not as a rule care about the question, and their answers can rarely be depended upon. A man may be asked the number and sex of his children; also if his father and mother are still "in the hall," i.e., alive. His wife, however, should never be alluded to even in the most indirect manner. Friends meeting, either or both being in sedan chairs, stop their bearers at once, and get out with all possible expedition; the same rule applies to acquaintances meeting on horseback. In a word, Chinese etiquette is a wide field for the student, and one which, we think, would well repay extensive and methodical exploration.

TREVELIAN;

ENTOMBED ALIVE.

CHAPTER XXX.

AFTER a brief pause the old woman continued her narrative.

"When Ralph was but a little thing, seven years old, there came another child, a niece of Sir Hugh, to live in the house. If the boy had dared, he would have been cruel to little Ethel Trevilian, but while I was there I kept him in check the more carefully as I knew she was the rightful heir of all he would possess, as the wages of my sin.

"The wages of my sin!" repeated the old woman, drooping her head and wringing her hands as she spoke. "Alas! and woe is me! The wages of my sin has been misery and death!

"Sir Hugh died, and Ralph took his place as knight, and when Ethel Trevilian's marriage was to take place the servants brought me word that the proud young lady's trousseau was so poor that she used to drop big but silent tears as she looked upon the mean dress she was to bring home with her, as Lord John Anselmy's bride.

"I went and spoke to him who thought himself my foster son, and told him to act as other gentlemen did at such times. He got very fierce, and resented with abuse what he termed my impudent interference.

"I did not mean it, but it would not, and I told him all and referred him to Mrs. Sweetapple, the nurse, who knew all, and Roger, the coachman, who suspected it; and, above all, I bid him look for the note that Sir Hugh had written about in the fly leaf of the Bible.

"He quailed before me as I spoke to him, and told me he did not believe one word I said. But I saw he did believe me, and he offered me money—which I would not take—to hold my tongue and never speak of it more. Whether he believed me or not he ordered a handsome trousseau for Miss Trevilian from London.

"Ten years afterwards I went back again to get him to help Lady Anselmy and her little daughter, when the husband and father died, leaving them in poverty. And I had to threaten to expose him if he did not do what I said he must.

"At first he offered me money—again I would not take it—and then he set his dog on me.

"I ran as fast as I could, but the dog was fleetest than I was, and would have torn me to pieces but for a boy who, I was afterwards told, was Sir Ralph's son, although I had never heard of his marriage.

"The boy called off the dog, and in two minutes the animal was tearing the clothes from Sir Ralph's back for striking the boy, whom it seems he loved better than the man.

"Again I went to ask for money for myself, to nourish a dying brother of his own. I was humbled to the earth before I would have gone on such an errand. I had to earn my own bread from the time I was eleven years old, when I was cast on the world; and after my husband's death I had to work hard to keep the children; but I never asked man or woman to lend me money till then.

"If I had been hungry and cold myself, I would have borne it bravely; but I could not see the one brother dying for want while the servants of the other had abundance. So I went to ask him to lend me money, and I promised to give it back to him in six months, and—

"The woman was choking with emotion she was unable to suppress, big tear-drops falling down on her clasped hands as they lay on her lap.

"Oh! I'm so foolish," she said, resuming her narrative. "He hounded his dogs on me again, and they tore my limbs till I lay three months on my bed with the sores they made, and—my boy died for want."

There was a pause of several minutes, during which the violence of the old woman's sorrow as it shook her frame made those around gaze upon her in silent sympathy.

"I have no more to tell. I left my house yesterday, meaning to go to Trevilian, that I might tell Ralph Moore to take his own name and leave the place. I could endure no longer all the evil doings that came to my ears, and I made up my mind to unburden my conscience and let Ethel Annesley inherit her own land. Heaven sent me to St. Armand's station, where my son was dying. I trust his sins were pardoned, and that I may hear the punishment of what my son has done."

The woman's story was ended. She gathered her cloak around her and rose to go.

"Sit down," said Harry Neville, addressing her. "You must hear my confession, as I have heard yours. The sunshine of prosperity has not always shone on your son's path. My early years in Trevilian Castle were passed in solitude and ignorance. Sir Ralph would not allow me to be taught, and it was only by stealth that Mrs. Barnett and Roberts taught me to read and write. By Sir Ralph himself I was kicked about worse than any humane man would use his dog. I shrank from him—I had need; he would not have allowed me to be sufficiently fed if he could have helped it."

"My life of loneliness, without other companionship than the servants, whom I feared to be seen speaking to, led me to spend most of my time in the library, a room Sir Ralph never entered; if he had I dared not. It was one of the rooms I was forbidden, on pain of his displeasure, ever to cross the threshold. He never did, so I read nearly all the time. One day I came upon a manuscript book called the 'Archives of the Castle,' and there I read, in faded ink, among other curious matter, these words:

"Under the octagon tower there is a dungeon, where men and women, enemies to the Lords of Trevilian, have lain and died. The entrance to the dungeon is from the back of the wardrobe in the balcony chamber; it is opened by a spring, which starts back by drawing forward the shelf at the top of the left wing of the wardrobe."

"Then came a long description of how to shut and open the spring inside, the descent, and lastly the way to open a shut, grated door, which fastened the dungeon."

"I learned it by heart, and then, when I could repeat every one of the instructions without fear of mistake, I went to the balcony room—one never used except as a passage to the armoury. I opened the wing of the wardrobe and pulled the shelf. At first it was difficult to move, but suddenly it came forward with a jerk, and at the same time the panel at the back sprang to one side. I saw only a few steps of a dark staircase—the rest was shrouded in intense darkness."

"I was not long in getting a light and finding my way down the long, steep staircase. The place was encased in dust, not unmixed with human bones. I, with many days' work, cleaned it up, gathered all the bones into one corner and covered them up with the dust. I tried to bury them, but could make no impression on the floor of the dungeon, which, although it resembled earth, was as hard as a stone."

"I thought of carrying them out, one by one, and so burying them outside; but I abandoned this scheme in fear of encountering Sir Ralph. It was well for me I did so, these bones helped me to make known the place of my death in life."

"One day, in coming up for something I wanted, I left the lantern I used down at the bottom of the staircase, and as I came to the spring-door, which I left open, I started with terror as I saw Sir Ralph, who I fancied was from home, standing looking into the space left by the open spring!"

"Where have you been?" inquired he, in a voice so much more civil than he was accustomed to use that it startled me."

"There is a dungeon down there; I was looking at it," I replied, half in dread lest my having done so might be considered a crime."

"A dungeon!" repeated he. "Let us have a look at it."

"I led the way with trembling steps. The moment he spoke I felt sure of the motive he had in going down there. It was well I did, for it put me on my guard."

"I went down the steps before him, but when I came to the bottom I stopped to one side, that he might look into the grated door, which was wide open, intending, while he was so occupied, to fly upstairs and make my escape."

"Go in first," said he, in the same smooth, civil way he had before spoken."

"No," replied I, speaking in firmer tones than I had ever before used. "No, I won't go in; I don't want to see it."

"No, you won't go in?" said he, in the slow,

bitter way he sometimes spoke when he was getting himself into a rage, to give me a more severe beating than usual. 'We'll see about that.'

"Seizing me by the shoulder, he endeavoured to pull me forward in front of the grate. I was large and strong for my age, and despair gave me additional strength, and springing at his neck I threw my whole weight on his neck and shoulders, pushing him toward the open grate. His foot slipped on something soft, and down he came, head foremost, into the dungeon, dragging me after him."

"He was stunned by the blow his head received on coming in contact with the hard flooring of the dungeon, and I sprang up and shut the grate before he was able to realize what had happened."

"He commanded me fiercely to open the grate. I took no notice of what he said, but lifting the lantern went up the stairs as quickly as possible."

"I heard him calling me in loud, angry tones to come back, as I ascended the steps."

"Poor fellow! he had time in the twelve years he lived there to change his words of command to tones of the most abject entreaty."

"Twelve years!" repeated Ethel, with a shudder.

"Twelve years in that terrible place were enough to make any one a fiend or a lunatic."

"Yes, Ethel, it was enough to craze the strongest brain; but having once put him there it was impossible for me to allow him to go at large again. If I had given him his liberty he would have given me a felon's doom."

"It only remains for me now to tell how he and I changed places. He feigned illness for a week, and then simulated the agonies of dying. I believed him, and, going into the dungeon to lift his dying head, fell into the trap which was laid for me."

"In a moment I was felled to the earth; he was free and I was the captive. You know the rest; but you can never know the suffering which my crime brought with it—how it followed me as a shadow in the noon-day, and lay on my breast like a burning brand by night. I had more peace during the six months I lay in that dungeon than I ever knew in the twelve preceding years."

"You must tell me one other thing," said the countess. "You said the bones helped you to make your captivity known. How was this?"

"I had a flint in my pocket, with which I could strike a light against the stones of the dungeon wall. I then lit the bones, and with the burned end marked the indented letters black."

"Oh! it makes me sick with horror to think of the terrible fate those to whom these bones once belonged had to endure. Who can ever tell the wild longing for freedom, the terrible dread with which they lay down to die?"

"I must go now," said the old woman, rising hastily. "I have work to do that no one can do for me, and I would not it should be left undone for all the land that lies between the two ends of the rainbow."

"Which way are you going?" asked Count Ramouski.

"To St. Armand's station."

"Then we shall all go together."

And together they went, a strange company—Count Ramouski, Harry Neville, and the old weird woman of the Deep Well, seated in Count Ramouski's carriage.

Ethel went to the hall door with the Widow Moore, making her promise to come to Trevilian to see her when she herself was once more settled there.

At St. Armand's station they were met by Sir Ralph's lawyer, Mr. Waldgrave, who told them he had received instructions from Sir Ralph, dated only an hour before his death, that his body should be buried in the little churchyard of St. Armand's, and that as little expense as possible should be put out on the funeral—no hired mourners, no mutes.

His wishes were carried out—Ralph Moore's body was put into a plain coffin and placed in a plain hearse. Heavily and slowly it moved, as if the coffin was made of stone, with only one follower.

The coffin was lowered into the earth in the gaunt little churchyard, above the still old town, and when the green sod was pressed down over the new-made grave of all who ministered to him in life none remained to say:

"Heaven rest his soul," only a silent, weeping woman.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A WEEK passed over before the return of Count Ramouski and Harry Neville from London.

In the meantime General Neville had gone to Chislehurst to make preparations for the reception of his grandson's family, who were for the future to make Chislehurst their principal place of abode, that property and mansion being very superior in every respect to Trevilian Castle.

It was necessary that Harry Neville—whom we must now call Harry Trevilian Neville, in right of his wife being heir to the property of Trevilian—it was necessary, we repeat, that he should spend a week or two at Trevilian, arranging his affairs and attending to the transfer of the estate to his wife as heir.

Immediately, therefore, on the return of the gentlemen from London the Count and Countess Ramouski, Harry Trevilian and Lady Trevilian Neville, at once proceeded to Trevilian Castle.

They occupied an open carriage. The day was lovely for the season of the year, the beginning of November, and the party were in high spirits—the countess and her son with easier hearts than probably they had ever before known.

On approaching the castle gate Ethel thought that she recognized one whom she had seen before in the man who opened it, yet feeling at a loss as to where or how she had seen the face.

An infantile voice attracted her attention to the door of the porter's lodge, where stood Dolly Holler with Toddlums in her arms, her face radiant with smiles; and, attired in a pretty stuff dress, she looked a very different person from the poor, dispirited, hard-working woman whom Ethel had left behind in London, and whom she had begged her husband to search for, and, if possible, to do something, not only for her, but for the release of her husband, so unjustly punished for a robbery he had never committed.

At a glance she understood the whole. Bill Holler had been rescued from confinement, and was now a lodge-keeper at Trevilian Castle.

This was the reason of the evasive answers her husband had given her when Ethel pressed him to tell her how he had succeeded in his search for Dolly and his endeavours to obtain Bill's release.

Ethel held out her hand, calling to Dolly to come and speak to her, and, shaking hands kindly, leaned over and touched with her lips the brow of the pretty-looking, pleased young woman.

Ethel sighed as the carriage went on. The sight of Toddlums had made her think of her own darling, whom she believed to be lying under the waters of the lake.

On arriving at the castle door scarcely was Ethel's foot on the first step in ascending the portico when her own little Willie, dressed in his blue velvet frock and white lace, as she had last seen him, rushed down the steps and sprang into her arms.

The child was perfectly wild with joy at seeing not only his mother but his father, whom, in his own childish way, he had missed, and had heard the servants say he would never see again.

"Where have you been, Willie? Who took you away?" and many such questions came pouring from Ethel's glad lips as she kissed and clasped her child to her breast a hundred times.

"I was in such a nice place, mamma, where I had two puppies to play with, and a lot of kittens, and chickens, and young ducks, and we lived in a nice little house without any steps before the door, and a nice old woman who made the breakfast for Alice and Mary and me, and we played all day long. I was never tired there, only when I thought about you, and the old woman always promised she would go for you when she had time. And the old woman who brought me there came to see me two or three times, and told me she would some day bring you."

"But what old woman brought you there? Don't you know who brought you to that place?"

"Oh, yes, she's in the library, waiting for you."

At this intimation the whole of the party proceeded to the library, where, to their astonishment, they found the weird woman of the Deep Well, dressed in her cloak and bonnet, ready to depart when she had resigned her charge into the hands of his mother and accounted for the way in which he came into her possession.

Without waiting to be asked a question she said:

"I have been waiting here for an hour back, expecting you. I have much to do at my own home, and can ill afford the time; but I would not go without telling you what another would not do so well. On the night you were taken to the lunatic asylum by my poor, misguided son I was here in a disguise no one could penetrate. I heard your cries and tears as you were taken away and the heartrending way in which you implored to be allowed to take your child with you. I could do nothing to help you then. I knew if I raised my voice in your defence it would defeat the object I had in view. You would very soon have had one less friend in the world, and, what was of more consequence, there would have been no one to tell the tale of my sin and its terrible consequences, which you already know. But although I could not help you I could help your child."

"I had not lived eight years in Trevilian Castle without being able to enter it by ways that servants

who had only lived a few months there knew nothing of. I remained at the lodge all that night and day, and next evening I went to the room where the child was confined, and by the help of a little wooden horse, and promises that I would bring him to his mother, easily persuaded him to come with me. I brought him to my sister's house, had his fine frock taken off, and his face and hair dyed, as I did to your own afterwards.

"The child was happy and pleased there; he had my sister's grandchildren as playmates, and none knew that the dark-faced, black-haired boy, in his coarse clothes, was better born than those he lived among."

"The old woman now rose to go, and all joined in begging her to remain in the castle for a few days."

"I cannot do so," was her reply. "I have business at my own home, and, were it otherwise, this castle is full of sadness and sorrow to me. I ruined my own child by bringing him here. But I daresay you would all like to know how I could tell about the captive in the dungeon here, by the power of my crystal?"

"Yes," replied Sir Harry. "That is a subject I have often thought on with wonder—how you were able to tell that a black crime marked my hand, and afterwards to see the captive in his dungeon, who nobody knew was there but myself."

"Well, I will tell you all about it, as much as I know myself," was the woman's reply. "When I lived in this castle an old woman, who had nursed Sir Hugh, used to come here every year to visit him. The nursery at that time was the balcony chamber, and she used to tell me many stories of a dungeon, the entrance to which, she had heard, was from the back of the wardrobe. She even pointed out the very place which, I have found since then, opened into the dungeon stair."

"Many a time I have tried myself to find the spring, which, she told me, was said to open the back of the wardrobe."

"Soon after I went to live at the Hill of the Deep Well."

"A gipsy woman, wandering about in a storm, came to my house, and died there. Before she died she gave me the crystal you have seen me use, telling me how I was to use it, at the same time saying that whatever I wanted to see in the crystal I must think of it and it would appear to me."

"I have sometimes thought her words were true, and I did see what my imagination told me I would, and did hear what I expected to hear. By this as it may, when you came to me," she said, addressing Sir Harry, "to have the fortune of yourself and wife told, I recognized in you at once the boy who had called off the dog with which my son hounded me from his castle many years before."

(To be continued).

A NEW POTATO DISEASE.—A new potato disease has made its appearance in Algeria within the last two years, and has totally destroyed two thirds of the crops, and threatens to do even a larger amount of injury. The destruction is caused by a very minute insect of the Lepidoptera order, of which the history is little known. It is only supposed that the larvæ germinate in the roots of various vegetables. The small moth deposits its eggs upon the young shoots of the potato the moment they appear above the ground. As soon as the eggs are hatched the small caterpillar, as slender as horse-hair, penetrates into the stem, and works its way down into the tuber, the interior of which it eats away. The grub which works the mischief is unknown in Europe, and the name has been given to it of *Bryotropha solanella*.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY.—A contemporary says that when the system of universal liability to military service is in full operation the Russian army will consist, in time of peace, of 900,000 field troops, 120,000 garrison troops, 80,000 local troops, and 68,000 special troops (for Turkestan, the Caucasus, etc.). To these will be added, in time of war, 164 reserve battalions (206,000 men) and 129 depot battalions (237,000 men) making 1,700,000 regular troops in all. Besides the above, there will be 200,000 Cossacks, and the Landwehr (opoltchenie) of 1,000,000 men. It will take some time before these troops can all be made available for active service after war has actually broken out; but the same authority believes that the following force will be at the immediate disposal of the government in such an event:—730,000 field troops, 120,000 garrison troops, 80,000 local troops, 206,000 reserves, 237,000 depot-troops, and 70,000 Cossacks. This will make a total of 1,463,000 men, or 163,000 more than the regular troops at the disposal of Germany. Of the field troops Russia would have only about 50,000 more than Germany; and the Government is therefore urged to take special measures for training re-

serve troops so as to make them ready for the field at the shortest notice.

OCTOPODS.

We confess to a few shuddering prejudices against creatures which yet have a good right to live and rejoice as we ourselves. Speaking out of the higher teaching of abstract justice, we acknowledge all these rights as things without question; but none the less we repudiate and repel when it comes to close quarters and personal contact. Among the things which make our flesh creep and our heart fall when they come too near are octopods—things, too, which make us wonder why they were created at all, or, being there, why they may not be annihilated. Yet octopods are not sharks—they will not devour one as a sitting; nor are they boars to strangle all the life out of one in a few moments; they have no poison like snakes, they have no beaks or talons like kites and hawks; they do not tear one with lion's claws nor devour one with tiger's fangs; nevertheless, though not deadly, they are odious, and even watching them with a stout plate-glass sheet between us and them is sufficiently trying to one's nerves. There is nothing about them that is not revolting. See them sprawling against the glass, all their myriad suckers in view, each sucker an insignificant hold enough by itself, but all at work together undetachable and sickening; see them with that queer kind of process, like a hollow drum, opening and shutting and protruding and retracting, as the best way in which they can manage such a simple thing as breathing; or see them when they gather themselves into a feathered ball and spring forward on their object, which then they enclose in their horrid arms and stick to, with their countless suckers; see them in action, see them at rest, and they are always hideous and horrid, things to avoid and things to beware of.

But we have other octopods than these; human two-footed, two-armed octopods; people who make life terrible to us, and for the sake of whom we live always with the sense of a coming horror and girded loins ready for fight; people who pounce, people who cling, with whom the slightest contact is instant adhesion and who, when they once stick, do not loose their hold. Idle are they, and without central purpose or wholesome occupation. Their time is their fardel, not their treasure, and they seek to shift it on to the shoulders of others who have less of it than themselves. It makes no matter how busy you may be, how small the space of time granted you in which to transact a large amount of work; the octopod makes his spring and captures you, and, unless you are swift and can evade him, he will have you in his clutches—when good-bye to work and the fulfilment of duties; the enemy is upon you and you are his prisoner and captive. To a busy man the octopod acquaintance may rank as so much loss of income. When he becomes on visiting terms with one he may write him in his day-book as costing him so much—like illness, fires, or robbery. In fact, he is a robber, stealing that which is life and fortune to his victim but which does him no sort of good.

But the octopod has no fine sense on which you can act. He comes to you at your most important moment, interrupts your most important labours. You tell him that you are busy; he smiles blandly, and says he will not keep you long. Minutes lengthen into portions of hours, and hours are completed and multiplied; your octopus sits immovable, still smiling and saying he is on the point of going. You take him at his word, and rise for the leave-taking. He rises too, and begins another chapter of his interminable discourse. He keeps you standing till you are sick and giddy, when you are forced to sit down again: on which he sits down with you, and your deliverance is as far off as ever. The dinner bell sounds, and your octopus pricks up his ears. He has been with you since before luncheon-time and he means to stay till you feed him. You had been inhospitable because wary, and had let the mid-day meal pass unnoticed, without an invitation to your unwelcome guest or refreshment for yourself. Now you are brought up standing. You cannot ignore your dinner, and your octopus does not mean to let you ignore it. You are forced by the law of hospitality and gentleness to say "Will you join us?" And you might as well do the thing with good grace; for if you did not ask him he will ask himself, and thus you will lose all the value to your soul which comes from virtue, and have none of the relief to your body which is sometimes wrought out by vice. And when it comes to dinner and your octopus still not dislodged, you may fold your hands in resignation, and look only to the small hours for your release.

A SOUVENIR OF ALFONSO XII.—In Barcelona is an artist, Zuloaga by name, who takes a steel-plate,

incrusts it with gold and silver, and with his hammer works out a box such as those of the Cinque Cento period, now so much sought after. ALFONSO XII. it is stated, has ordered of this artist a surcoat de table, decorated with the arms of Spain and of England, which his Majesty means to present to the mass at the Woolwich Artillery School as a souvenir of his sojourn with his late comrades.

ECENTRICITIES OF THE PARISIAN FAME.—Shop-lifting is on the increase in Paris on the part of the fair sex; a real countess has just been sentenced for such thieving to six months' imprisonment, and two other persons for the same period. All had excellent testimony as to character, and proof of an uncontrollable weakness to amox, which the judges disposed of by applying the full term of residence in prison, where they must cease to do evil and perhaps learn to do well. An old maid, aged sixty-seven, has been sent to prison for an attempt to burn a neighbour's house and herself; she admitted she so acted "because she had no one to love her."

HOME FERN.—Gold fish should never be taken in the hand, but should be removed, when necessary, by means of a small net made of mosquito-netting. They may be fed with anything that they will eat, but what they do not eat should be taken out of the water. They generally die from handling, starvation, or impure water. Many people consider white mice pretty pets, yet object to them on account of their money odour. By keeping a small box of chloride of lime or carbolic disinfecting powder in their cage this odour may be entirely neutralized. The best diet for white mice consists of wheat flour and biscuit dust, alternating with oatmeal once or twice a week. An occasional crust of bread, nibble of oats, canary seed, etc., will be relished. Raw meat, fed just before the litter, will prevent their devouring their young. Milk should be their sole beverage. They are very intelligent little creatures, and can be taught innumerable tricks and antics. One was once caged with a canary, with which it was on the most amicable terms, eating and drinking from the same dish without quarrelling.

HARD AS OAK.

BY

J. E. MUDDOCK.

CHAPTER XXV.

We are not over happy: on fortune's cap we are not the very button. *Shakespeare.*

"Look you here, I intend to back out of this affair. It's unpleasant—very unpleasant. I don't see why I should play angler to catch your fish, especially as it seems to be all angling and no fish."

"Does it? I think you have little to complain of. Your net has been pretty well supplied of late, and if there is one vice I detest more than another it is ingratitude."

The speakers were two men:

One was a short, squarely built, well-dressed fellow, about forty-five years of age. At one period of his existence his face must have been handsome. Even now there was some refinement in it, though as he sat with the full light of a lamp falling on him it was easy to see that dissipation and recklessness had marked him with their indelible brand. There were the deep nerve lines running from the corners of the upper lip to the curve of the nostrils, though a well-trimmed and cultivated moustache partly hid them. The muscles beneath the eyes were relaxed through habits of drinking and formed that peculiar bulging appearance so conspicuous in men who have for years indulged to excess in potables. In colour the eyes were gray—a cold, expressionless kind of gray which invariably indicates a temperament peculiarly selfish, while the pointed chin and thin lips, between which the cigar was held so daintily, spoke of cruelty.

The whole face, in spite of its faded and worn beauty, was not a good one. There was danger in it. It was difficult to say how, or why, or where, yet that indefinable something was there which causes one to instantly feel prejudiced against a person at the first sight.

The hands were long and thin and white, and the blue veins were plainly discernible. On the little finger of his left hand a large diamond ring sparkled, and with his right hand he toyed daintily with some trinkets, pendant from a massive gold chain, stopping now and again to remove his cigar, and then pulling little rings of blue smoke upward, and watching them curl and fade away.

In spite of the word *reue*, which was indelibly branded on the man's face, there were pride and refinement in his bearing. He was, as it were, a ruin of wrecked nobility. His nature had been perverted, his life misspent—that was unmistakable.

This person was Reginald Holmwood, the worthless father, the faithless husband. He had inherited a fortune on coming of age. It was his ruin. He squandered it, became a social outcast, and an adventurer, married, spent his wife's fortune, deserted her, and lived on his wits. Too idle to work, too proud to beg, yet he possessed literary ability of a very high order, and had held excellent positions on many of the leading journals, but he never held them long. His apathy and idleness and dissipation were intolerable, and after a brief experience his employer would invariably politely hint that his services could be dispensed with. His newspaper connections, however, had brought him in contact with some of the highest people in the land, and on them and by them he lived; but it was a very precarious existence, and often failed, and he was reduced to painful straits.

Reginald Holmwood had no medium. He was either well up in funds or utterly penniless. The latter, however, was the rule; the former the exception. Many a less guilty man than he had pined and languished in a prison dungeon, but then they had been lacking in two essentials which are indispensable to any one who would prey upon society—tact and inventive faculty, two strongly developed traits in Reginald's character.

His companion was a tall, broad-shouldered man. We have met him before. He it was who rubbed shoulders with Robert Alastair on that eventful night in Aberdeen.

Uamah Spindrel—a name as curious as was the man's character—was a strange mixture of the good and bad. For example, he would resort to the roughest and most despicable ends to acquire money, but, having acquired it, would, if solicited, fling it recklessly to the first beggar he met, leaving himself penniless. He was a man from whose creed to-morrow was carefully excluded. He provided only for to-day. The rest was left to the chapter of accidents and good luck. He was a happy-go-lucky kind of fellow. He might have made a good man, but he missed his mark and became a bad one. He and Holmwood had run a career of some years together, but Holmwood, being the cleverer and wittier of the two, had made the other man his tool.

It is a sultry, an extraordinarily sultry night. The stars seem to quiver in a haze. There is not a breath of air stirring.

The stream of traffic still flows on, for the hour is yet early, so that what with the rattle from the streets and the conflicting babel of voices from the gentlemen assembled, each may talk to his neighbor without much danger of being overheard.

At any rate Spindrel and Holmwood do not seem to give themselves much concern about eavesdroppers, for they speak loudly—but are sitting a little apart from the others.

Behind them, and not more than two yards away, a man sits by himself—a stout, blotchy-faced, bejewelled and coarse-looking fellow. He is smoking. He puffs his smoke lazily into the stagnant air; his eyes are shut, but his ears are open. He is listening.

"Look here, Uamah," Mr. Holmwood remarked, giving the trinkets on his watch chain an extra twist, and then dashing them about spitefully. "It's no use whining when the deed is done. It is perhaps a pity that we did not hit upon some other expedient to induce her to leave. But I know that would be efficacious. It was, and there's an end of it, though I may remark that if I had had the slightest idea she would take it to heart so I should never have resorted to it. If this marriage can only be arranged, it will be a good thing for her—"

"And a better thing for us," his companion added, quickly.

"Possibly. At any rate if the thing is worked properly we may touch a few thousand pounds, and these, invested in stocks, our minds will be easy as to the future."

The scheme proposed for the disposal of his daughter by this reprobate father may be briefly explained.

One of the most popular as well as one of the wealthiest judges at that time was James Lloyd—a man who by honourable conduct and untiring energy had risen from an humble position and amassed an enormous fortune. His family consisted of six girls and a boy, the latter about five and twenty years of age, and a wild, dissolute, and reckless young scamp. On becoming of age he had stepped into a very large fortune, which had been left to him by a relation; and this was again supplemented by a handsome allowance from the soft-hearted old judge. The result of this was the young fellow went astray, and very soon got into the hands of the sharks. And young Frank Lloyd was well-known for his dissipated and spendthrift habits. The consequence was he was tabooed by every respectable family, and his father had disowned him.

A good-natured, brainless fellow, Frank had fallen

an easy prey to any adventurer who liked to fleece him. He had squandered a vast sum of money, but was still in possession of a considerable balance. One of his right-hand friends and boon companions was Uamah Spindrel. He possessed a powerful influence over Frank, and, he it said to Uamah's credit, that though he could have done so over and over again he had never swindled the young fellow out of a penny, though he had no hesitation in sponging upon him, if such a term is admissible.

Spindrel, who was aware that Holmwood had a daughter, once proposed to Frank that he should get married. The young man pool-pooled the idea, on the ground that, owing to the character he bore, it would be difficult to find a respectable woman to accept him. With an amount of condescension quite overpowering Spindrel undertook to procure him a wife from England, who, knowing nothing of his antecedents, would not be biased by any such considerations as those named. Moreover, she had the advantage of being highly connected, although, owing to some family difference, she was temporarily deprived of a fortune, and it would, therefore, be necessary for her husband to make a large settlement upon her.

Lured by the bait of a young, handsome, and well-connected woman, Frank Lloyd vehemently vowed that if his dear friend Spindrel would arrange this little affair for him he would, with the exception of a slight reserve for his own use, settle the whole of his fortune upon her.

Uamah lost no time in laying the scheme before Holmwood; and that gentleman, having an eye to the main chance, and being dead to every sense of shame, readily acquiesced.

One difficulty, however, presented itself, and that was, how was the girl to be induced to leave her home?

Her abandoned and shameless father had for some years tried to get the child away, with a view of marrying her to some wealthy man, but hitherto all his endeavours had been fruitless.

But after considerable cogitation he hit upon a plan, and Spindrel was to be the emissary to carry out this diabolical plot. He went to England, the expenses being paid by Frank Lloyd, was successful in his mission, and returned after a brief absence, bringing with him the unfortunate Mary Holmwood.

Lloyd was introduced to her in due course, and lost no time in proposing marriage, for her beauty seemed to enthral him from the moment that he saw her, while, without positively rejecting him, she had hitherto refrained from giving her consent to become his wife.

Her young face was always clouded. There was a shadow of great trouble lying upon her.

Spindrel, who really possessed some little feeling, observed this and began to have pangs of remorse for the part he had played, and resolved to wash his hands of the whole affair.

The dissolute father had used every persuasion he could think of to try and induce Mary to marry Lloyd. He had even resorted to threats. But she had remained inflexible.

To resume the thread of the narrative. Spindrel did not seem to be at all influenced by the arguments of his colleague. He had evidently made up his mind that the business was of an exceedingly unpleasant nature, and he had better back out of it.

This was not at all agreeable to Holmwood, for Uamah was a valuable ally, and the influence he possessed over young Lloyd was necessary to keep the rascal in order.

"I am not quite clear that the investment you speak of will make my mind easy," said Spindrel, in answer to his friend's last remark. "This girl of yours is such a bonny lass that she is worth a good husband, and hang me if I shouldn't like to see her get one."

Holmwood sneered, and he twisted his cigar about uneasily.

"If you are getting so dandified moral and straight-laced, why don't you go in for the preaching business?" he answered, with ill-concealed annoyance.

"We are too far in this mess to recede, and the best way is to shut one's eyes to the unpleasant part of it. Lloyd is willing to marry Mary, but Mary doesn't seem willing to marry Lloyd. Not that she has expressed any dislike to the fellow, at least none that we know of, but there is something on her mind. Possibly she's had some girlish flirtation in England, and the remembrance of it hasn't quite worn off. I would give a trifle to know if that is so, and to hit upon some means to argue her out of her nonsense."

The blotchy-faced, bejewelled man shifted his chair again, so that he got a little nearer to the speaker.

"Well, I tell you what it is, Reginald," said Uamah. "I ery off with the affair. If your lass and Lloyd like to marry each other well and

good; let them. But it shan't be with my connivance."

"You don't mean to say that you're going to raise any obstacles?" exclaimed his companion, with just a shade of alarm in his tone.

"No; I mean nothing of the kind. Still I don't countenance the affair."

"You're an idiot!"

"Thank you."

"I tell you what it is, Uamah Spindrel. I don't like to be thwarted. Having set my mind on doing a thing, I'm bound to do it. If I allowed the considerations to weigh with me that you do—well, I think I might take to stone breaking or street sweeping. But I am too far in the mud to attempt to go back now. I went wrong at first, that was my parents' fault. I've been forced to play a losing game since. But, hang it, I've lived the life of a gentleman, and when I can no longer do that I've got a six-shooter, and I'll spend my last shilling on an ounce of lead, and make a good paragraph for the papers. Fame can always be bought, you know, even if a fellow has to blow his brains out to get it."

"It's the only way you'll ever attain it," answered Uamah, ironically.

"Don't be so sure of that," was the answer. "But I am going."

He had risen from the chair. He threw away the stump of his cigar, stretched himself, shook his pants down on his boots, then turned suddenly round to his friend, and, bending his head, for Uamah was still seated, he said, half jokingly:

"Look here, old fellow, there is one other way by which I might gain fame."

"How?"

"By blowing your brains out instead of my own."

He laughed loudly, took out his case, gave Uamah a cigar, took one himself and lit it.

"You don't seem inclined to move yet, Spindrel."

"No, not just yet. It's too hot to roam about."

"I am off then. I have an appointment. Good night."

The two men shook hands and parted.

Uamah Spindrel lolled back and stared at the stars.

Holmwood sauntered leisurely down the avenue, whistling an air from a new opera, and behind him stalked like a shadow the blotchy-faced and bejewelled man.

CHAPTER XXV.

How quickly nature falls into revolt

When gold becomes her object. *Shakespeare.*

REGINALD HOLMWOOD continued to saunter along the road in a listless kind of manner, puffing the smoke from his cigar, playing with his trinkets, and musing on many things, but more particularly his daughter Mary.

He was very anxious indeed that she should marry Lloyd. It would be a good thing, he thought, as his own resources, upon which he had depended for some years—a precarious dependence in all conscience—had begun to fail. His boast about the ease with which he gained the entrée to select circles was but a boast now. People had tired of him. Some even went so far as to openly declare him to be an idle, dissolute scamp.

He had been well known as a disreputable character. He had got a bad name, and the old proverb was fully exemplified in his case. Moreover, he had only escaped the law by the skin of his teeth. He had been mixed up, though he did not actually appear on the scene—he was too cunning for that—in some swindling transactions in connection with railway shares. His co-partners in the affair had been detected, captured, and punished, but his superior shrewdness saved him. Want of direct evidence failed to bring his guilt home, and he was discharged, though ever since he had been a marked man. His goings and comings were watched and his transactions narrowly scanned by the police. His future, in consequence, gave him just a little uneasiness.

He had reached a secluded part of the road, beneath the shadow of some trees, when a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder. He started, for it was so suggestive. The sudden shock caused him to grow deadly pale and to bite his cigar through so that it fell to the ground and the sparks from it were scattered in a little shower.

He turned round, sharply and suddenly, and his eyes rested upon the blotchy face of the bejewelled man.

"Pardon me," said the stranger, with a smile, "I didn't intend to startle you."

"Permit me to say, sir, that you have a deuced uncourteous way of attracting a person's attention," was the answer, the voice being a bit tremulous. "You've spoilt my smoke into the bargain."

"Do me the honour of accepting one of my cigars."



[AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION.]

The stranger handed him a sealskin cigar-case well filled, and Reginald made choice of one.

Having nipped the end of his cigar and lit it, he said:

"You are a stranger to me: I don't know that I ever saw your face before."

"Possibly not. Still I know something of your affairs."

"What do you mean?" he said, quickly, and in alarm.

"My dear sir, don't excite yourself. It is unnecessary. I am neither detective nor warrant officer. I can be of service to you."

"I am bound to say this is a curious way of offering your services to a gentleman who has not yet solicited them."

"A man who means business should act in a business manner, Mr. Holmwood."

"Really you have the advantage of me. Perhaps you will favour me with your name and business."

"My name—well, you shall know in good time. My business is in relation to your daughter."

"My daughter?"

"Yes. For reasons that I will not take the liberty of inquiring too closely into you are desirous that Miss Holmwood should become the wife of Mr. Frank Lloyd."

"Well, what of it?" in a tone of annoyance.

"There are some difficulties in the way, however," continued the man, without noticing the interruption, "and I think I can smoothe them away."

"You?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"You said a little while ago that you believed some girlish flirtation, on the part of your daughter, operated against your wishes."

"Ah, you have been playing the listener?"

"Not playing the listener; but I heard."

"This is an offensive liberty on the part of a stranger. And gathering something of your purport, which is extortion, I refuse to have any farther conversation with you."

Holmwood said this in the hope that the man would go, for he was half afraid of him. But the man didn't go. He stroked his chin, and his paste diamonds glittered as they caught the light from the lamps.

"Not quite a stranger. You are Reginald Holmwood. You have a wife living in England. Your daughter was in Aberdeen, engaged to the proprietor of an opera troupe. Your agent went there and brought her away. You see I know something about you, Mr. Reginald Holmwood."

"And who are you?"

Reginald was uneasy, and he chewed his cigar with vexation.

"One who can aid you to accomplish your purpose. For some days I have been trying to see you, but have always arrived where you have been just as you had gone. I was told to-night I should very likely find you at the hotel. One of the waiters pointed you out to me; but as you were engaged with another gentleman I had the politeness not to intrude, but wait."

"Really your condescension has made me your debtor," said Reginald, sarcastically.

"Don't let us waste time in false compliments. You wish your daughter to marry. There is an obstacle in the way of that, I can remove that obstacle, and, I have good reason to believe, bring about the marriage you desire."

"Before I venture to discuss the matter with you I should like to know more about your motives."

"My motives are easily named—money."

"You are at least candid."

"You know the old saying there should be honour amongst—gentlemen. Your friend Uamah Spindrel has thrown you overboard. I am prepared to help you to rise again. I am in possession of facts which in an interview with your daughter will enable me to influence her to comply with your wishes. If I am successful I share the plunder. If I fail, well, there's an end of it."

"I certainly must give you credit for being blunt and candid, but I am not prepared to admit that your statements are correct. You are a perfect stranger to me, and for aught I know may be some unprincipled man without either good character or connections."

Holmwood said this as a sort of feeler. It was his habit to be cautious, and he did not altogether like the style or appearance of the stranger.

"Look here, Mr. Holmwood, don't beat about the bush. If I am an unprincipled man, I could without moving from this spot place my hand upon another. But a truce to such stupid nonsense; I have given you proof that I know something about you. I am suffering from impecuniosity, a state peculiar to both of us. If I can accomplish what you desire, and bring grist to the mill, what more do you want? At any rate I venture to assert that your end will not be gained without my service."

"You are certainly not lacking in self-confidence," Mr. Holmwood answered, his usual composure not altogether recovered, for the truth was he was not accustomed to be treated so familiarly, and his pride was just a trifle wounded.

"It is necessary for some men to believe in themselves, for the world will not believe in them. You and I are specimens of this class of the genus homo. Possibly you do not read the list of passengers per mail and other steamers published in the papers. Or if you do the name of Robert Ainsleigh amongst the arrivals by the 'Scotia' would not probably have arrested your attention, you not having an interest in that particular name. But I am in a position to state that that gentleman's sole object in coming here is to seek your daughter. In short, he is that daughter's lover."

"The fiend!" exclaimed his listener.

"I am not acquainted with his satanic majesty, but I believe Mr. Ainsleigh to be a very fair representative of him. At all events the fellow means mischief, and I bear him no very great love. If he obtains an interview with your daughter before I see her your hopes of marrying her to Lloyd will never attain fruition. If I can only render this fellow's journey here fruitless I shall be very well satisfied, and I think I can do that."

"Then what do you propose to do?" Holmwood asked.

"See your girl first. I can give her such information about this Ainsleigh as will astonish her; and if she has any lingering regard or affection for him—and I know she has—I will undertake to extinguish it. And I strongly advise you to remove her without delay from her present address. Take her away, that's my advice."

"You seem genuine, at any rate, and I agree to your proposal. When do you wish to see the girl?"

"The sooner the better. Say to-morrow morning."

"Good. Where?"

"That is for your consideration. Remove her to-morrow, for Ainsleigh will lose no time in seeking her, as he knows the address. Take her out for a trip, but don't let her go back. You understand?"

"Very well. Call to-morrow and see me."

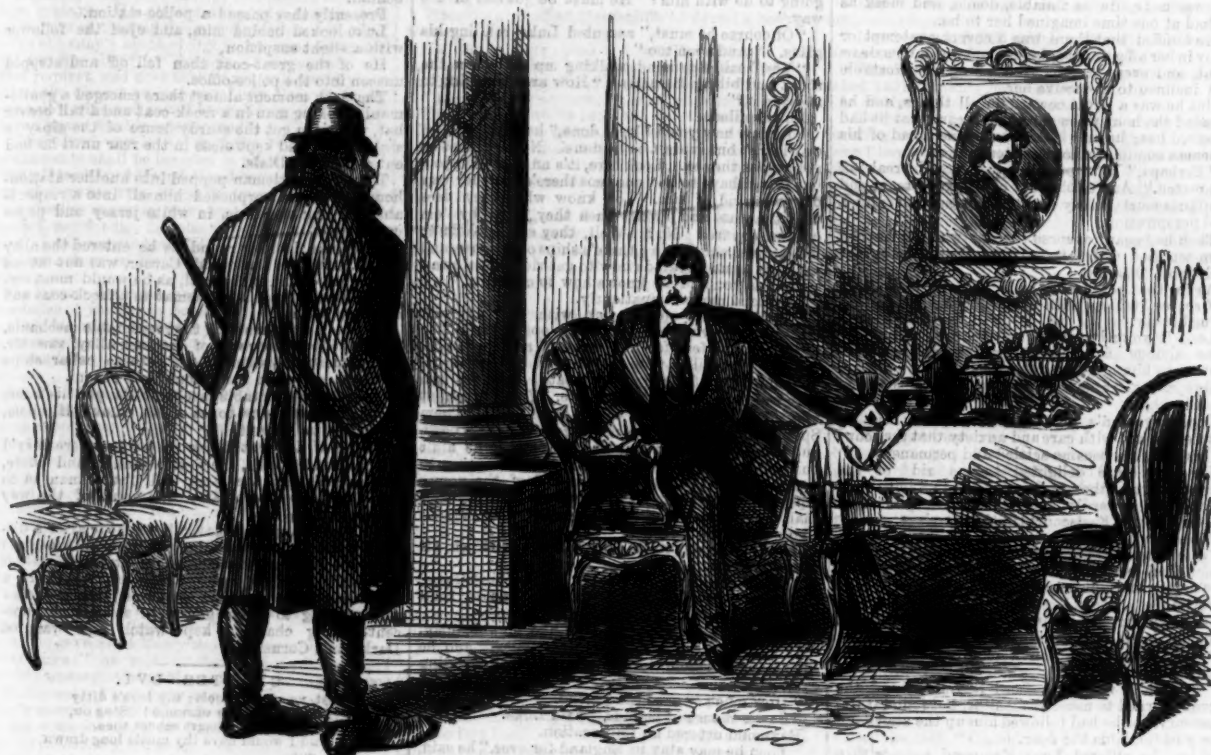
"It's an engagement," said the other, as he held out his hand, which Holmwood shook.

"By the way," exclaimed the latter, "you haven't told me your name."

"Really, I beg your pardon. Here is my card. Good night."

The blotchy-faced man walked away, and Mr. Holmwood went under a lamp to read the name on the enamelled bit of pasteboard. It was "Adolphe Rubini."

(To be continued.)



["LIKE FATHER LIKE SON."]

THE GIPSY PEER; OR, A SLAVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

CHAPTER LV.

Oh, yet we hope that thy bath
Some sweet, if short, reward
Though poets sing her in our path,
With stern-set face and sword,

LORD RAYMOND having eagerly concurred with Florence's wish that their coming marriage should be accomplished most quietly, and pleading at the same time for an early one, the preparations were both hurried and private.

Of course Florence could not be sacrificed without all the usual splendour and ornaments, and the dress-makers, milliners and all the other tradespeople concerned were soon hard at work.

Let them work ever so quietly, however, the news cropped out, and at Northcliffe was welcomed with something approaching delight.

That is, as far as the peasantry and the servants were concerned.

Lord Northcliffe had not yet been told, and Lady Northcliffe, though she had once so much desired the match, now seemed to derive little pleasure from it.

The true state of her feelings was disclosed when Florence left town and came down to Earls Court.

The morning following her return home she went down to Northcliffe.

Lady Northcliffe almost trembled when she saw her.

"Florence, my dear," she said, kissing her, "you look dreadfully unwell."

"Do I?" said Florence, with her calm, sad smile.

"I do not feel so, dear Lady Mary."

"You look it," said Lady Northcliffe, with a troubled face. "Tell me, Florence," she said, drawing her closer to her. "Tell me, is this—this marriage in accordance with your wish?"

Florence paused a moment, then she met the anxious eyes with a calm regard.

"Yes, I wish it to take place," she said, in a low voice.

"But—but," said Lady Northcliffe, "are you sure that you will be happy, my dear?"

"Who can be sure of that?" said Florence, with so wistful and mournful a smile that Lady Northcliffe's eyes filled with tears.

"Well, well," she said, with a sigh: "You know your own heart, my dear. It is very sudden. There is some money-matter at the bottom of it I am told, but though I long for nothing with greater desire than to have the right to call you daughter I would

not have you marry Raymond for a thousand thousand pounds if I thought you did not love him."

"Do we women all marry for love?" said Florence, wearily. "Is there not something higher; duty, for instance, filial duty, dear Lady Mary?"

"Ay," said Lady Northcliffe. "But have a care, Florence; some sacrifices are greater than we have any right to impose on ourselves; there is still time—"

"Lady Mary," said Florence, interrupting her, "my mind is made up. You do not know how necessary this marriage is."

"Well, well," said Lady Northcliffe. "You and your father know best; it is not for me to urge you to retreat. Have you told Lord Northcliffe?"

"No," said Florence, with a pained flush. "I do not wish him to hear it until—until he is obliged to be told."

"But why?" asked Lady Northcliffe, with mild surprise.

"Because—do not ask me!" said Florence, sadly.

"Dear Lady Mary, there are so many things I cannot—I dare not speak upon. Bear with me and keep Lord William in ignorance for awhile. I am going to see him; may I?"

"Yes, my dear Florence," said Lady Northcliffe, kissing her again with a troubled sigh.

And Florence, hiding her heavy, aching heart beneath the calm, quiet smile, passed into Lord Northcliffe's room.

He was sitting very much as she had last seen him, but when she stepped softly round to him and looked at him for a few minutes without his seeing her she noticed that there was a great change.

The look of vacancy which had been the prevailing characteristic of the face had given place to an intelligent, watchful, and yet profoundly sad expression.

He sat leaning his head upon the white, slender hand, brooding upon the past, his eyes fixed before him.

Florence moved.

He looked up and held out his arms with a low sound of delight.

The poor girl slid on her knees, and was enfolded upon his heart.

"My girl," he murmured, "look up. Why, what have they been doing to you? Your father does not take such care of you as I should do, Florence, or he would not have let you get so pale and thin. What have you been doing?"

"Balls, concerts, theatres without end," said Florence, speaking as cheerfully as she could.

"But you are better, dear Lord William—much better?"

"Yes," he said, with a profound sigh, "I am

better, Florence. I have recovered my right mind, but I am almost inclined to say the last state of this man was worse than the first. With the return of memory and reason have flown back a flood of troubles, Florence. Have you seen—Raymond?"

He put the question hurriedly, and hesitated at the name as if he spoke it with repugnance.

"Yes," said Florence, averting her face.

"I want to see him—I will see him," said the old earl, sternly. "They tell me something of his doings, but I will know all. He has placed that ruffian, Luke, as head-gamekeeper, and he keeps him so, though it is a matter of common talk that the game has been sold openly, and that he's intoxicated day and night."

"Hush, dear Lord William!" said Florence, entreatingly, for the old man's face flushed with passion.

"Nor is that all," he continued, in a calmer but still angry tone. "I have been going over the books, and I find—there, I will not accuse him undefended; but I will see him. He came here at the day of poor Marion's death, and left again without seeing me. Was he afraid? If so, of what was he afraid? He is the first Northcliffe that ever had cause for fear or shame—"

"Hush! hush!" pleaded Florence. "You must not talk of him so to me—to me who—"

"Who what?" said the earl, turning up her face, as she hid it on his bosom.

"Who—will be his wife."

The earl's hands tightened upon her form till they pained her.

He stared before him for a moment, and his lips formed the word:

"Never!"

Then, as if with an effort, he repressed his emotion, and, with a smile, stroked her head.

"If you marry my son you will be my daughter," he said, in a strange, slow way. "Yes, my daughter."

He repeated this several times, then bent and kissed her.

Then he said:

"Go, my child, go!"

And Florence, without a word, left him, fearing that her sudden arrival had worked him harm, perhaps brought about a relapse.

But there was no insanity, no impotence upon the face with which the old earl stared before him, looking as it were into the dim future.

As for Lord Raymond, he seemed to look forward to his approaching happiness with as much uneasiness as joy.

He still remained in London, vacillating between his hotel and 27, Norman Road.

Now that he had gone through the form of making Miss Emilia Slade his wife he discovered that she was not quite so amiable, docile, and meek as he had at one time imagined her to be.

He fancied that there was a covert contempt or irony in her affectionate glances and words of endearment, and every day he grew more uncomfortable and inclined to undecieve her.

But he was a great coward in all things, and he dreaded the hour when she should learn that he had deceived her; he also had a wholesome dread of his baseness coming to Lord Dartegale's ears.

"Perhaps," he thought, "they would break off the match." And at the idea of losing Florence and the Earls court money he would break out into a cold perspiration.

Then he began to curse the day wherein he had been tempted and flattered into the snare by the arch-fiend, Denville.

As for that gentleman, he had quietly made himself scarce, taking with him, of course, his vilely earned booty.

Lord Raymond passed day after day waiting for some tidings from Luke, yet shrank from writing to him or going to Northcliffe.

But day after day passed and Luke Smeaton made no sign.

Lord Raymond's nights grew sleepless, and his days so racked with care and anxiety that the scowl on his evil face became settled and permanent.

He was quite delighted to get rid of the Dartegales, and though he promised to follow them quickly he inwardly determined to keep clear of Northcliffe and Earls court till the marriage.

The ceremony was arranged to take place at the private chapel at Earls court, beneath that old tower which had been the scene of Horace Denville's treachery and dishonour and Tazoni's noble heroism.

One evening, as he was sitting at the hotel sulkily drinking his wine after dinner, a servant entered and told him that a man wished to speak with him.

"Send him up," said Lord Raymond, and the servant turned to usher the visitor, but found it unnecessary, for he had followed him up the stairs and now stood outside the door.

When he entered Lord Raymond rose with a sudden pallor and visible repugnance.

"It's you, is it?" he said.

"Yes, it's me, my lad," said Luke, throwing open a great, rough coat and holding out his hand, which Lord Raymond, with another shudder, forced himself to clasp. "Yes, it's me, and I suppose you've been wondering why I haven't turned up before?"

"Yes," said Raymond.

"Ah!" said Luke, throwing himself into a chair, stretching out his legs before him, and leaning over the table to reach the decanter, "ah, no doubt, and I should 'a' been here before this to tell you how things have been going on if it hadn't been for this," and he turned his face to the light and pointed to it.

Raymond shuddered again.

"Why, what have you done to your face?" he asked.

"You may well ask," snarled Luke, with an ugly exclamation. "It's a pretty sight, isn't it? I'm marked for life, too, so the doctor says!"

"Who did it?" asked Raymond, gulping down a glass of wine and edging his chair away from the outstretched legs.

"Who did it? Who d'ye think but that Tazoni? Ah! you ought to be grateful, my boy, for all your father's done for ye!"

"Hush!" said Raymond, looking round him with alarm, "don't speak so loud, and—sit up, for Heaven's sake! This is not a private house, but an hotel; servants will come in, and what do you think they'd say if they saw you stretched out like that?"

"Who cares what they say?" retorted Luke, savagely. "Can't a father make himself comfortable when he drops in to have a chat with his son? Let the servants come!"

Raymond rose and, with sallow agitation, turned the key in the door.

"Now," he said, in a low, angry tone, that still had something of fear in it, "now don't think you're going to bully me, or torment my life out. I'm pretty well tired of the game as it is, and a little of this sort of behaviour from you will make me turn it up."

"There, there you needn't cut up so rough, my boy," said Luke, sulkily drawing himself into a less insolent position. "Come and sit down and have a glass of wine, and I'll tell you the news."

Raymond reseated himself, filled up the glass and nodded.

"Go on; have you got that gipsy fellow?"

Luke winked.

"Pots calls the kettles black sometimes, my lad," he said, laughing. "Yes, we've got him safe and sound, tied by the heel in a quiet little crib, where all the detectives in England couldn't find him."

Raymond heaved a sigh of satisfaction.

"I'm glad of that," he said, "and what are you going to do with him? He must be got out of the way."

"Of course he must," assented Luke, refilling his glass. "And soon too."

"Yes," said Raymond, walking up and down the room, and biting his nails. "How are you going to manage it?"

Luke smiled.

"I know how you'd like it done," he said, with an evil leer, "but it ain't to be done. No, he must be got across the sea. Look here, it's an expensive job, but it will have to be done, 'cos there's no other way of getting rid of him. You know what they does with the plate and jewels when they come by 'em off the square? No? Well, they sends them to Amsterdam and Spain; there's ships o' purpose, and captains as understands how to get rid of the swag as well as you and me knows how to collar it."

Raymond moved impatiently.

"Don't—don't mix me up with it," he said.

"You'll ruin everything with your open mouth."

"Never you fear for me, sonnie," retorted Luke.

"Well, what will have to be done will be to smuggle Tazoni on one of the Spanish boats; once got him over to Spain and you're all safe. You can enlist him there, and leave him with a quiet mind. Them Spaniards never let's a soldier go until he's dead, and he's that pretty soon, 'cos you see if he ain't bulletted by the enemy, he's shot for attempting to desert, and so there's soon be an end of the young gipsy. Confound him, I'd like to see him shot! I shall bear the marks of his heavy paw on my face till I go off the hooks myself."

Raymond sank into the chair again, with an air of satisfaction.

"That's all settled," he said. "I feel more easy; I never could have felt safe while he was in England."

"He ain't out of it yet," said Luke, significantly. "As I said, it will cost a heap of money," and he eyed Raymond from the corner of his dark, cunning eyes.

"How much?" asked Raymond.

"Say a thousand pounds," said Luke.

Raymond uttered an imprecation.

"Then he may stay in England for ever," he said, savagely. "I've got no thousand pounds to fling away. You talk as if a thousand pounds were only a hundred pence!"

"So they are to you, as is going to marry Lady Florence Dartegale, heiress o' Earls court," said Luke, with a leer.

Raymond bit his lips savagely.

"Well," he said, with another exclamation, "you shall have it; but, mind, it's the last! I've been paying money away like water!"

"Who to?" asked Luke, with sudden gunning.

"To—everybody," said Raymond, flushing. Above all things he was desirous of keeping his Emilia Slade intrigue from Luke Smeaton's knowledge.

"Ah! well, you oughtn't to stint it here, where it's all for your own safety," said Luke, as Raymond drew out a cheque. "Now I'll see as our troublesome customer is quietly smuggled aboard ship, then he'll be put out of the way for ever."

"I hope so," said Raymond, savagely.

"Now for a word of advice, my boy," said Luke, rising and buttoning his coat, preparatory to taking his departure. "Get this ere marriage over as quiet and sharp as ever you can; you understand me?"

"I understand," said Raymond, with an evil smile, "and be sure I shall; I want to feel firm ground. And now a word of advice to you," he added, with an angry scowl. "You'd better keep yourself away from Northcliffe. You've behaved like a lunatic, and people haven't forgot to tell me about it. Keep away from there for the future."

"I mean to," said Luke, sulkily putting on his hat, and holding out his hand. "Fahall keep pretty quiet until you comes to your own. When you're lord of Earls court and Northcliffe I shall expect to be made comfortable for life."

"So you shall be," said Raymond, with a sigh and a shudder, as he touched his hand; "only keep quiet."

"You can depend on me, my boy," said Luke, with a grin, and Raymond unlocked the door and let him out.

As Luke left the hotel a crossing-sweeper who had been standing idly looking up at the windows of the grand building fell to sweeping his path across the muddy road with laudable industry, and touched his ragged cap to Luke for a penny.

Luke Smeaton gave him an imprecation instead and tramped on.

No sooner had he turned the corner than the crossing-sweeper ran to a door, and, taking an overcoat and fur cap from behind a scraper which had made a convenient hiding-place, donned them with marvellous rapidity, and stole after the stung passenger.

For some time they walked on, Luke a little way ahead, and the great-coated individual a little way behind.

Presently they passed a police-station.

Luke looked behind him, and eyed the follower with a slight suspicion.

He of the great-coat then fell off and stopped unseen into the police-office.

The next moment almost there emerged a gentlemanly looking man in a frock-coat and a tall beaver hat, who soon got the sturdy figure of the gipsy in sight again, and kept close in the rear until he had entered Seven Dials.

Then the gentleman popped into another station-house, and metamorphosed himself into a respectable working mechanic, in white jersey and paper cap.

And Luke, looking round as he entered the alley which led to the Darkman's Corner, was not at all suspicious of the individual, as he would most certainly have been of a gentleman in a frock-coat and chimney-pot hat.

So it came to pass that the respectable mechanic, slinking into a doorway of the dark alley, saw Mr. Luke Smeaton disappear down those cellar steps which had received the unconscious Tazoni.

Then the respectable mechanic slapped his knee, and, in the soft, slow tones of Mr. Samuel Hitham, exclaimed to himself:

"Well, if I didn't think that was where they'd taken him! Well, he's safe and sound there, and he can't spoil the game. I'll put a man in to see that they don't carry him out of the way there."

And so it happened that half an hour after a direct detective was watching the alley in the guise of a half-drunken man. And night and day that watchfulness was never slackened. Either a drunken man, or a fink, or a swag, or a woman with a kicking to do but gossip, or some such innocent-looking character kept watch and ward on Darkman's Corner.

CHAPTER LXI.

List, ye sweet angels; my love's ditty

Is a song to me of home! Sing on,

Oh, here, for my heart echoes there

And I would have thy music long drawn out.

To return to Lord Harry.

His first feelings were those of intense confusion as he stood beside the still form of his dead uncle and recalled his last words.

He was roused to a full consciousness of his new and strange position by one of the medical men approaching him and saying, respectfully:

"Had you not better get a little food and rest after your journey, my lord?"

Harry Beauclerc started, forgetting his new title, and wondering why the doctor had addressed the dead man. Then, as it flashed upon him that he was an earl, he turned, with a sigh, released the cold hand of the old Lord Dalkine, and followed the doctor from the room.

In the dining-room the servants—many of them weeping—had laid out a luncheon hurriedly prepared, and the lawyer was waiting there to receive his instructions. They were very few.

First he gave the necessary orders for the funeral, which was to be conducted with all possible respect to the great dignity of the dead earl. Then he requested the lawyer to search for the will and the certificate which the earl had spoken of with his last breath.

The lawyer left the room for that purpose and returned in a few minutes with the papers in his hands.

Harry Beauclerc desired him to examine them.

The lawyer did so and expressed his surprise and regret.

"I—I am sorry to say, my lord, that the late earl has bequeathed a vast sum to another branch of the family, a branch of whose existence I was, until this moment, in complete ignorance."

Harry inclined his head.

"It is all valid, is it not?" he asked.

"Well," hesitated the lawyer, "I am afraid it is, my lord. Still, we could manage to contest their claim, that is, if the lady mentioned as Yvra, or any of her children, are still living, which is doubtful."

Harry Beauclerc frowned ominously as he regarded the lawyer stertly.

"You strangely misunderstand the motive of my question," he said. "If the will is not valid—perfectly so—the good enough to draw me up a deed of gift that I may make over the sum mentioned therein to Lady Vere, Dalkine or her children."

The lawyer stared at a question.

"Was it possible that a man newly come into a noble title and an immense fortune should be anxious to get rid of a great portion of it?"

"I—I—Certainly, I will follow your instructions, my lord," he said. "But you will allow me to remark that few persons would act with such honour and magnanimous generosity as you are dis-

playing. The whole of the estate is really your due."

"Enough," said Lord Harry, stopping him with a stern gesture. He always detested a lawyer, and never more so than at this moment, when according to the attorney's crooked lights he was doing his best for his client. "Enough. I have only one other request, and that is that you will exert yourself to the utmost to discover Lady Vera Dalkine, my uncle's wife, and any of her children, my cousins. Do not spare trouble or expense."

"Very good, my lord," said the lawyer. "Advertisements shall be inserted in all the papers."

"Ay," said Lord Harry, "and set men to work—men who are used to it—to discover them. Mind, I am really eager in this, and I do not care how dearly I pay for it. Let the search be instituted at once. I will remain here until after the funeral and will then return to England to seek for them myself."

The lawyer departed, and Lord Harry spent the remainder of the day in sealing up the strong room and all his uncle's letters and papers. The next he went over the castle and was surprised at its extent and magnificence, which surpassed his expectations.

Meanwhile he anxiously expected letters from Tazoni, but there came none from him, and the reason soon became apparent when a letter arrived from the faithful Parker stating that Mr. Forest had not called nor had anything been seen or heard of him.

Then Lord Harry grew extremely anxious, and the morning after the funeral entered the mail train with a feeling of uneasiness he could not throw off during the whole of the journey.

His first question of Parker when he stood in his own chambers was:

"Has Mr. Forest been?"

"No, my lord," said Parker. "Here are your letters, just as you left them."

And he gave Lord Harry the letters as he spoke. "Strange!" he said. "Parker, I feel uncomfortably uneasy. Order Magnolia. I shall go down to Richmond. I may hear something of him at the gipsy's camp," he added to himself, blushing slightly at the consciousness of another reason for the visit to the Surrey common.

"It is a strange mystery, to which I can see no solution as yet," he thought, as Magnolia, delighted at once more feeling her beloved master on her back, bounded along the road. "I hope there has been no foul play while I have been away. When I review all that has passed, Frank's strange suspicions and fears, I feel nervous and depressed. Heigho! That must be shaken off."

And passing his hand across his brow he urged Magnolia into a gallop and gave himself up to the delights of anticipating the meeting with the beautiful gipsy-girl with whom absence had only made him the more in love.

He soon reached the common and struck across it, fearless of the gipsies' sticks, which he knew would now only be raised in his defence.

But there were no signs of human proximity, of friend or foe.

The gipsy huts had gone, the common was bare. While he sat motionless in his saddle, looking listlessly and with great disappointment upon the place where he had met and held sweet converse with Lurli he felt singularly helpless and hopeless.

"Whatever concerns Frank Forest and the beautiful, true-hearted girl seems wrapped in mystery and difficulty," he mused. "Now where shall I turn to find either him or her? Who could track a gipsy tribe? Who could find a lost man in London? Anyhow, I can go to Plumpett, and I'll do that without loss of time."

And the impetuous young lord coolly turned his horse's head and rode straight back to London, alighting at Mr. Plumpett's office in the Strand as cool and self-possessed, though inwardly anxious and disappointed, as if he were strolling in the corridors of the opera-house.

Mr. Plumpett welcomed him eagerly, but could only add to his disappointment.

He had heard or seen nothing of Frank Forest for weeks.

The landlady at the cottage had been able to give him no information of his whereabouts or the cause of his sudden absence, and Mr. Plumpett's inquiries in any direction had been equally futile.

Then Lord Harry went back to his chambers with a heavy heart, not knowing what to do next, for he had so fully expected to see or hear from both Tazoni and Lurli that the double blow emphatically stunned him.

As last, after fidgeting with an admirable dinner, he hit upon an idea.

He remembered that Lady Northcliffe had given him an invitation to Northcliffe, and he determined to go down there at least for a day. Town was to him at that moment unendurable.

He remained all night at his chambers and started the next morning for Northcliffe, having first

had an interview with his solicitor, whom he instructed to commence a keen search for the missing Lady Dalkine.

When he arrived at Northcliffe he found a hearty welcome.

He had always been a favourite with the old earl, and his father had been a great friend of both Lord Dartegale and Lord Northcliffe.

"I am glad to see you, Harry," said Lord Northcliffe, when he went into the invalid's quarters. "You are like your father, and we were great friends. And so Lord Dalkine is dead? And you are Lord Harry now? Ah, what changes, what changes! He left a large sum of money for you, didn't he, Harry?"

"Not for me," said Lord Harry, and he then recounted the strange dying confession and request.

"Strange," said Lord Northcliffe. "He kept the marriage secret. Vera, Vera! I seem to have heard the name. Perhaps she's dead, and died childless, Harry?"

"I hope not," said Lord Harry, fervently. "I hope not with all my heart. I am looking for them very eagerly; nothing would give me greater pleasure than to find them and hand over their own."

"I can believe that," said Lord Northcliffe, pressing his hand.

"How is Lord Raymond?" asked Lord Harry.

"Don't speak of him!" said Lord Northcliffe, quickly, and with a spasm of pain across his face. "Don't speak of him! let us talk of something else. Harry, you must call at Earls Court to-morrow—you must see Florence Dartegale. You know her, do you not?"

"Yes," said Lord Harry, "and admire her; she is the only woman I like with all my heart, save one."

"Save one," said the old earl, muttering inaudibly. "If he would only marry her, if anybody would only marry her and save her from that villain! Save one! and who is that?"

Lord Harry sighed as he rose.

"I can't tell you yet, Lord William," he said, "for, strange to say, I have lost her—I seem to have lost all I cared for. My very best friend has disappeared suddenly, as I dare say you have heard. I hope to find both of them, and when I do I think I shall have a singular story to amuse you with. And now good night, for they told me not to stay too long and tire you."

"Good night, Harry," said the old earl, "but they mistake, they mistake. I am not so weak, either in mind or body, as they think me."

Lord Harry pressed the thin, white hand and left the room.

After a sleepless night, for his thoughts and desires kept his eyes open, he rose and breakfasted with Lady Northcliffe, then announced his intention of riding over to Earls Court, and asked if he could bear any message.

"Only my love," said Lady Northcliffe, with something like a sigh. "You will find Florence greatly changed," she added, mournfully.

Lord Harry rode off, thinking hard and listlessly, so hard that he missed his way and pulled up to ask it.

The youth of whom he inquired directed him across the moor, and Lord Harry turned his horse's head in that direction.

Half-way across his heart gave a great leap.

Right before him, lying in the hollow, was a gipsy encampment.

"Fahw! how foolish love makes one! This may be another tribe; indeed, it is fifty to one against its being hers!" he murmured.

Still he rode with a fast-beating heart, which beat still more wildly when he saw in the middle of the enclosure the gay tent and wolf-skin rug.

As before, half a dozen men leapt out to meet him, but they met him with friendly smiles and eager, curious words, and offered to hold his horse as he leapt from the saddle with the eager inquiry:

"Where is your queen?"

One of the men pointed to the tent, and Lord Harry was advancing to it with quick step when an old woman emerged from it and barred his path with fierce, glittering eyes and threatening mien.

Lord Harry, courteous to a woman in whatever guise or of whatever age, raised his hat.

"I want the queen, good mother," he said.

"And what do you want with her?" asked Martha, for it was she.

"That shall appear afterwards," said Lord Harry. "Tell her, if she be near, that I—Harry Beauchere—desire a word with her."

"No," said Martha. "Go your way. She will have no words with such as these."

Lord Harry, deeply mortified, was about to turn away, but at that moment the curtain was thrust aside and Lurli sprang out, ran towards Lord Harry, then paused, blushed and trembled. Lord Harry, with a joyous flush, came forward, took her hand and bent over it.

"How kind of you!" he said. "I thought—I feared—that you had put that cruel message in the

old woman's mouth, and I feared that I had offended you."

"You deceived me—and us," said Lurli, with sad reproachfulness.

"Deceived you! I!" said Lord Harry. "I would die rather!"

"Where then is Tazoni, my brother, our chief?" asked Lurli, shaking her head mournfully.

Lord Harry pressed her hand.

"Believe me, I would give my life to answer that question satisfactorily. Come, I see that you believe I have not deceived you, that I did not speak falsely when I said that I knew him, and that he had been seeking you! If you would only hear me tell you how I have been prevented from coming to you and from searching for him!"

"I will hear anything you have to say, will you not, Martha?" said Lurli, looking at the old woman wistfully.

"Ay," said Martha. "Sit ye in that tent yonder and let us hear why you have deceived us!"

Lord Harry led Lurli to the empty tent, and, having seated her and Martha, threw himself down upon the ground and commenced a full account of his journey to Scotland.

"I was compelled to go, you will acknowledge that?" he said, eagerly.

"Yes," murmured Lurli, turning away her eyes from his eager ones.

"I wrote to him, I wrote to my servant, I did all that I could, and I will do all that I can do now to restore him to you. You believe that?" and he ventured to take Lurli's hand, which hung at her side.

"Yes," she murmured again.

"And ye say that the old Earl Dalkine is dead," croaked Martha, so suddenly that Lurli started.

"Yes," said Lord Harry, gravely.

"And so ye are the new earl, Lord Dalkine?" asked Martha, fixing her small gray eyes upon him.

"Yes," said Lord Harry, simply.

Lurli drew her hand away from him and edged away from him.

What a distance yawned between an earl and a gipsy girl!

"Yes," he said, "the old earl is dead, and he has left me the title and a duty with it. He told me a curious story on his death-bed, which will interest you. Perhaps—who knows?—you may be able to help me."

"Tell it," said Martha, curtly.

"You must know then," said Lord Harry, addressing Martha, but looking at Lurli, who shyly glanced at him now and then, as he lay extended in graceful negligence upon the ground, "that my uncle, the earl, had made a secret marriage, and kept it so secret that until he confessed it to me no one knew of it. Soon after his marriage he and his wife parted, and he never saw her more; sadlier still, he died not knowing whether she was alive or dead, childless or the mother of his children. But sure he suffered sorrow and remorse for his neglect, and in some way to atone for it he left a vast sum of money to his wife or her children, if she had any and were dead, and charged me, with his dying breath, to search for them and convey their fortune to them."

"Poor lady!" said Lurli, pitifully. "And have you found them?" she asked, looking down at him thoughtfully.

"Not yet," he said. "But I am trying to, and I hope with all my heart that I shall succeed. I have told you this with some slight hope that you might help me to that success."

Here he looked at Martha.

"You should remember the names of many of your own and other tribes, and perhaps you may remember hers?"

"Hers?" broke in Lurli. "Why should Martha remember the name of the great lady, the earl's wife?"

"Because," said Lord Harry, "she was a gipsy, her name was Vera!"

At that moment Lurli started, turned deadly pale, and was about to utter an exclamation, but a happening to catch the dark, twinkling eyes of the old woman, was silenced by the expression of warning and command in them.

"Vera," said Lord Harry. "A pretty name! She was a queen, like you; perhaps as beautiful," he added, in a low murmur, venturing to take her hand. "How you tremble! how pale you have grown too! I have wearied you—"

And he sprang to his feet.

"No! no!" murmured Lurli, brokenly, her colour coming and going fast, her bosom heaving. "No, I am not weary, tell me—tell me more about the—"

the lady. Ah! what is that?"

She broke off to exclaim as through the tent opening she saw a number of the men rushing to a spot at some little distance.

Lord Harry turned his head.

Then Martha rose and hobbled to the tent.

"Something has happened," said Lord Harry.

"Hark, how they shout! They are coming this way."

And he followed Lurli out of the tent as the crowd of men, women and children seemed to be hurrying towards it.

(To be continued.)

HUNTED FOR HER MONEY.

CHAPTER I.

IN the northern part of Belgium, in the province of Anvers, in the midst of a vast, dreary, and monotonous plain, dotted here and there with windmills and intersected with ditches, stands a grim and lonely old chateau.

It is surrounded with wide, old-fashioned gardens and courtyards, and these are encircled by a brick wall, twelve feet in height.

The mansion, which has borne from time immemorial the name of the Château Valbeck, belongs to an ancient Flemish family, the present representative of which is a boy at school.

His guardians, with a view to his enrichment, have leased the two hundred acres of flat lands, comprising the main portion of the estate, to a little agricultural colony, and wheat-fields, cabbage-plots, and grazing pastures, divided by ditches, are spread on every hand, and present the appearance of an immense garden.

The chateau, with its few acres of grounds, sometimes finds a tenant for a few months, but is more often unoccupied.

Some two or three years ago the agents of the young Count Valbeck, residing at Antwerp, received a call from an English gentleman, who desired to hire the chateau for a year.

In lieu of giving references he paid a year's rent in advance. He then procured a staff of Flemish servants, and accompanied them himself to his new residence, where he established them.

The season was early spring. Already the plain around the dwelling was beginning to display patches of various shades of green; already the flats were dotted with busy labourers; and the windmills piled solemnly through the lengthening days.

The new tenant found the dwelling chill and damp from long disuse. A great store of Hainault coal was laid in, and fires were kindled in all the rooms.

The English gentleman remained several days, and then, having made the house habitable, he went away.

A week later, in the dead of a dark and stormy night, when the colonists were all housed and asleep in their hamlet at the farther edge of the estate, when even the servants were in bed, a close travelling carriage came swiftly along the narrow road threading the plain, and drew up before the massive gateway of the chateau.

A servant, a stupid-looking Fleming, dismounted from the box and pulled the bell violently. He was obliged to repeat the summons many times before a light glimmered through one of the windows of the chateau, and the old Fleming housekeeper put up the sash and demanded shrilly what was wanted.

"The master is come!" was the answer. "Let us in!"

The housekeeper disappeared from view, and the light vanished with her.

The English gentleman put his head out of the carriage window and muttered imprecations. The wind blew fiercely across the moor-like expanse, and the rain fell in solid sheets.

At length, through the pitchy darkness, came the sound of an opening door, the clatter of wooden sabots upon the paved courtyard, the rattling of bolts, bars, and chains, and then the great gates swung open, and a wide-mouthed, shock-headed stable-boy, with a lantern held high above his head, gave them admittance.

The carriage rattled into the yard and drew up in the close-covered porch. The house door opened, and the housekeeper, with a candle in her hand, appeared on the threshold.

The English gentleman emerged from the carriage and helped out a lady, who ran up the steps and entered the wide hall. A second gentleman, evidently the son of the first, then alighted, and both—father and son—helped out a fourth passenger, a slender girl, heavily veiled, who appeared to be nearly helpless.

"My niece," said the lady, as the housekeeper bent forward, her face full of curiosity. "She is an invalid, and quite exhausted. Lead the way to her rooms!"

The housekeeper, bearing the light, led the way upstairs. The lady followed. After her came the two men with their limp burden.

Two upper rooms had been prepared especially for the young lady—the "invalid niece." She was carried into one of them, and the housekeeper dismissed for the night.

The next morning the gentleman who had hired the house, and whose name was Colonel Brand, made his appearance at the breakfast-table, accompanied by his wife. The son, Randal Brand, sauntered in a little later. The "invalid niece" did not make her appearance either then or thereafter during the days that followed. No servant in the house ever saw her face. She never quitted her rooms, and it was found that the doors were always locked. Mrs. Brand waited upon her young charge personally, and no servant had even a chance to listen at the closed doors.

At the end of a week the girl's existence had come to be regarded by all the servants, save the housekeeper and the coachman, as apocryphal. And even those two, who had looked upon her shrouded, helpless figure and veiled face, gave little thought to the mysterious girl. They were stolid Flemings, nearly devoid of curiosity, dull and stupid to excess, and they accepted the state of affairs in the household as if it had been the most natural in existence. They never inquired after the "invalid niece;" they even avoided speaking among themselves of her after Mrs. Brand had once hinted that her young relative was "not quite right in her mind." Indeed, from the hour of that communication, they felt an awe and terror of the "invalid," as if she had been a beast of prey intent upon their destruction.

The week was followed by other weeks, until a month had passed away.

The April days, full of sunshine and warmth, had come. The level plain around the chateau was growing greener every day, and presented more than ever a garden-like aspect. And still, although a month had passed since her arrival, the mysterious girl had not crossed the threshold of her chamber.

One night—a night very like to that on which the tenants of the Château Valbeck had taken possession of their domicile—a night wild with storm and wailing winds, the three Brands, father, mother and son, were gathered in the ancient drawing-room around the cavernous hearth, conversing together in cautious whispers, now and then involuntarily glancing over their shoulders as if they feared being overheard by some intruding servant.

Upstairs, locked in her own rooms, the "invalid niece" was walking her floor.

Her apartments were two in number, connected by folding-doors. The inner room was bedchamber and bath in one. The outer room was wainscoted from floor to ceiling with oak, darkened by time to the hue of ebony. The effect was depressing and gloomy in the extreme, and was not to be counteracted by the thick crimson carpet on the floor, the easy-chair before the hearth, or the glowing coal-fire whose red lances of light half-illuminated the chamber.

There were no books to be seen, no pictures, no sewing materials. Only the scanty supply of solid furniture and the ruddy fire redeemed the place from absolute bareness.

The windows, however, were heavily curtained with faded damask. Behind the thick flowing folds were hidden bars of iron, that made the rooms a veritable prison.

These apartments had once served as the nursery of the Valbeck children, and the window-gratings had been put in their day to secure them against possible accidents. These stout bars served another purpose now.

There was no taint of madness about the girl who paced her room with swift, impetuous tread—no trace of invalidism in her elastic movements or in her countenance.

She was strikingly beautiful, with a pale, clear complexion, which was yet not pallid. Her forehead was broad and low, and from it was carelessly brushed away massive waves of tawny burnished hair. Her eyes were large, of darkest gray—almost black—deep and luminous, with slumbering fires in their dusky depths. She possessed a mouth of rare sweetness and tenderness; a slim, swaying figure, instinct with grace. Her strength of intellect, her beauty of soul, her loveliness of disposition, it was easy to see, equalled her remarkable personal attractions.

She continued to move to and fro, with the grace of a leopardess, pausing at every turn to listen.

"Why doesn't she come?" she whispered. "If she would only come and go! I shall not dare make any attempt to escape until I am rid of her for the night."

She turned toward the window, but paused, hearing a muffled tread in the corridor without. Then a key grated in the lock, and Mrs. Brand entered.

The lady bore a tray, on which was a crust of bread and a glass of water. She deposited her burden upon a small table close at hand, and stood just within the threshold, her hand upon the door, which she closed behind her.

Then she contemplated the girl with keen, cold eyes, as if she sought to read her soul.

Mrs. Brand was past middle age, and was a large

portly, arrogant woman, with a flushed face, a row of gray puffs of hair on either side of her narrow forehead, a long, hooked nose, and thin lips set firmly together in a most disagreeable and determined expression. One might search in vain her haughty countenance for one gleam of womanly kindness. She was hard and selfish and unscrupulous to the very core of her being.

"What is your answer to-night, Beatrix?" she asked, in a cold, monotonous voice, as if repeating a question she had asked a hundred times before.

"The same as this morning—as last night—as last week—as every day since you brought me to this prison—no, no—a thousand times no!" declared the girl, her eyes flashing, her passionate young voice ringing out stern and decisive.

Ordinarily, having heard that answer, the woman would have departed. But to-night she lingered. She had something more to say.

"Beatrix," she said, slowly, a cat-like gleam in her dull eyes, "you don't know what you are fighting against. You are only a girl of twenty, ignorant of the world; you have been petted and pampered all your life; you are in most things a mere child. And we three are pitted against you—we three who know the world, who are bold and daring, who mean to subdue you and bend you to our will, or—"

"Or kill me!" cried the girl, impulsively.

The woman smiled—a strange, slow, repulsive smile.

The girl saw the smile and shuddered.

"The end must be submission or death!" said Mrs. Brand, after a brief pause. "You have said it, Beatrix."

"I will never submit—never! I will die first!" exclaimed the girl, her face growing whiter, her gray eyes glowing with a steady, dusky light. "Mr. Brand—I will never call you aunt again—you shall triumph only in my death. And if I die from your persecutions my blood shall be upon your head for evermore. In the day when you and your husband shall stand at the bar of judgment how shall you answer for your guardianship of the orphan niece committed to your care? My father thought when, dying, he entrusted me to your charge—you, his only sister and surviving relative—that he was securing my happiness. Ah, if he had only foreseen what would come!"

"But he did not foresee!" said Mrs. Brand, with a sneering smile. "I and my husband are the lawful guardians of your person, Beatrix Rohan, until you marry, or reach the age of twenty-one. You are not very likely to marry within the coming year, unless you marry my son. You have never entered society; you have never had a lover. You certainly will not have opportunity to form acquaintances here. For a year longer you belong to us and are completely under our control. You are buried alive in this grim old house. There is not a person on earth to seek you out or inquire after you. If you die here, there is no one to ask how you died. The trustees of your property never trouble their heads about you. You are utterly helpless. You have been shut up here a month—"

"Yes," interrupted the girl; "and for a month I have heard no voice but yours. I have seen no face but yours during that time, save once or twice the mocking visage of your husband or son peering in at the door. You have heaped insults upon me. You have fed me upon bread and water. See how thin I have grown, and she pushed back the sleeve from her arm. "You have refused me books, newspapers, my needle even. You have been cruel, insulting, threatening—you, my own aunt, the woman who promised my dying father to be a mother to me. But you have not conquered me. That, thank Heaven, you can never do."

The girl's eyes flashed with her mighty indignation; her exquisite face glowed with aroused spirit.

The woman regarded her for a few moments in silence, and then said, in a smoother voice:

"You must be tired of this solitude, this prison fare, this dreary loneliness, Beatrix. You must pine for your out-door walks, for freedom to come and go at will, for a sight of other faces. Downstairs there is light of candles, a piano, books, and presently dinner will be served—a dinner with soups and meat and wine. I know you are hungry and faint from want of food. Will you dine with us? You have only to promise to marry your Cousin Randal in a week's time—"

"I will not promise!"

"You will marry him or die!" said Mrs. Brand, in a hissing voice, and with eyes that now glittered evilly, while her florid face darkened. "We are poor and in difficulties. We have luxurious tastes, a position in society, and no money. You are a great heiress. Your father inherited a fortune and married

a fortune. I had money of my own, but we spent that long ago. If you should die before you reach the age of twenty-one your fortune would come to me, your father's sister, and his natural heir after yourself. I am persuaded, Beatriz, that you will die before you attain your majority—unless you become the wife of my son, Randal."

There was a depth of hideous meaning in the woman's voice, a frightful malignity in her eyes. It was as if for an instant the mask had been stripped from her wicked nature, and all her evil purposes were unveiled.

The girl did not answer; she could not. But the whiteness of her pure and noble face, the horror in her dilating eyes, attested that she comprehended the awful design of her kinswoman.

"To-morrow," continued Mrs. Brand, still in that fierce, sibilant voice, "your food will be diminished one-third in quantity. When your fire goes out to-night it will not be relighted. We begin now more rigorous measures, you see. We shall soon break your haughty spirit! Hunger and damp and cold will inevitably bring you to your senses—or to your grave!"

"Life with Randal Brand would be a living death," said the girl, slowly. "From his boyhood it was his delight to torture all dumb creatures—to oppose the helpless—to injure the defenceless. I have seen him pull the wings from flies, in his savage love of inflicting pain—I have seen him kill my favourite kittens, and he laughed at my frantic struggles to save them, my pleadings and distress—I have seen him beat his horse until the animal was goaded almost to madness. I have seen him throw down in the street, in pretended accident, but purposely, a poor, crippled old man. It is not three years since he covered my dog with oil and set him on fire—I hear Fido's howls of agony still! He delighted to torture even me, a little helpless child. And this is the man you would force me to marry! A man with the soul of a savage! I hate him—I loathe him! I should die if I were to marry him. Better death by lingering torture before marriage than after!"

"You will change your mind in the course of another week!" exclaimed Mrs. Brand, with a disagreeable laugh. "A crust of bread only for a day's sustenance will soon weaken both your body and mind. I can see how you have changed within this past month. You have not half the physical strength you had a month ago. We had to drag you from the moment we landed in Belgium to keep you quiet. You will be quiet enough very soon. It is April weather outside, but these stone walls are full of winter damps and chills. Two days without a fire, and your body will be racked with pains. If already you are so weakened with meagre and insufficient food, how long will you be able to stand cold and hunger? But enough for to-night. To-morrow night, when I repeat my usual question, I shall expect a different answer."

Without another word, but with an evil, gloating expression, a smile of sinister triumph, Mrs. Brand withdrew, and the door was shut and locked behind her.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN the sound of her enemy's steps in the corridors without had died away the girl sank down upon her knees before the hearth and buried her face in the cushions of the easy-chair.

So young—so delicately nurtured—beautiful as a vision—the heiress of immense wealth—what a fate was hers!

In the minutes that followed her young soul be-cought Heaven with a bitter and passionate pleading to befriend her, to guard her, and to guide and to help her in the attempt she must make this very night to escape from the toils of her enemies.

She arose at last, and ate the crust of bread which Mrs. Brand had brought to her, although her palate almost refused it.

"If I do not effect my escape this very night," she said to herself, "I must give over the project for ever. This solitude and starvation are killing me! I am weaker than I was yesterday; I was weaker then than upon the day previous! Mrs. Brand is right. I cannot bear this torture another week! Surely I shall succeed in loosening the bars to-night."

She crept to the door and listened. All was still as death outside. She hung a shawl upon the door-knob in a manner to cover the key-hole, and then stole to the yawning chimney and thrust one arm up into its black ascent. When she withdrew her hand she held in it a dinner-knife, its originally white handle blackened with soot, its blade worn and jagged and broken. She eyed the weapon lovingly.

Upon the day subsequent to her arrival at the Château Valbeck this knife, then whole, had been brought upon her tray with her dinner of meat. She

had hidden the knife in the chimney, and not all the searches of Mrs. Brand had availed to find it. The woman had finally concluded that she had not taken the knife to the prisoner's chamber, but she reduced the girl's diet immediately to a crust of bread and a glass of water, and had been careful never to convey even a spoon to the prisoner's room.

Beatriz, knife in hand, stole like a shadow to one of the windows, lifted the curtains, and climbed into the deep, high window seat.

Night after night, with her waning strength, she had toiled at the stout window bars with that broken knife, while her enemies slept. She had loosened two bars in their sockets in the stout oaken frame. Could she remove them entirely to-night? She went to work, with white face and lips set sternly, nerved by an awful desperation.

Outside was life. Inside death lurked for her. She could not die! She was so young; life might be so sweet; even a bare existence which should be unmenaced by her enemies had charms for her. She must escape!

Listening now and then, her heart seeming to stand still at every sound, she toiled desperately. At length, weak and trembling, she rested her forehead upon one of the cold prison bars. And now for the first time she was conscious of the storm outside. How the wind blew! How the rain fell! It was a terrible night, the elements raging with all the fury of unloosed demons.

"An awful storm!" shuddered the girl. "Yet I must escape to-night, if at all. The very storm will befriend me. The servants will be all housed; and any noise I may make in escaping will not be noticed."

She resumed her task. She had advanced her work upon the previous night to such a state of forwardness that she had thought a single half-hour's labour would be sufficient to remove the two bars. But it was a full hour before the first bar was wrenched from its socket by her tensely nerved hands and a quarter of an hour afterwards before the second bar was removed.

She sank down then weak and trembling. For many minutes she was deathly still. Her white face, upon which a single red gleam from the fire rested, looked as if she had fainted.

After a little she stirred, gathered herself up feebly, and crept down from the window-seat.

She listened at the door. Then she went to her wardrobe and took out an entire suit of warm clothing, and, with quivering hands, proceeded to dress herself. A dark blue serge dress replaced the light cashmere she had been wearing.

She put on also a long-sleeved and belted blue waterproof cloak, a large cape of similar material, a straw hat, and over that the hood of her cloak.

Her movements were slow and cautious in the extreme. Fully attired for her perilous adventure, with high, thick boots protected by rubber overshoes, with gloves in her pocket, the girl next packed a small hand-bag with a change of linen, and with all her jewellery, and tied it securely about her waist.

Her purse was in her bosom, where for days she had carried it in order to insure its safety. It contained the half-yearly allowance of money entire, as she had received it from the guardians of her estate six weeks before.

She was now ready for her flight. She produced from its hiding-place in one of her trunks a stout rope which she had secretly made during her imprisonment.

It had been formed out of her clothing torn in strips and braided, and was strong enough to support her light weight. It was heavily knotted at intervals of a few inches.

The girl picked up the fire-poker—a long bar of iron with a hooked end, which by long use and misuse bore a striking resemblance to a reaping hook, and secured it to her person.

"I may need it in self defence," she thought. "It is a better weapon than the knife. It will serve me also in scaling the wall."

She climbed again into the window seat, and essayed to push up the window. It was secured by an old-fashioned spring-catch, and yielded to her pressure.

She then opened with difficulty the heavy wooden shutters. The rain now beat in upon her in torrents. Beatriz had taken the precaution to cover the fire, and all was dark behind as well as before her. She put out her head and tried to pierce the gloom with her great, luminous eyes.

Upon the day succeeding her arrival at the Château Valbeck Mrs. Brand had rehearsed to her the loneliness of the place and its defences, including the twelve-foot brick wall, which enclosed the entire premises. Through a crevice in the blank wooden shutters covering her windows Beatriz had studied the defences of the place day after day. It was well

that she had done so. In this impenetrable gloom eyesight was but a mockery.

"I cannot see my hand before my face," she thought. "How am I to get clear of all this peril? I can only do my best. Surely Heaven will help me!"

She secured one end of the rope to the stout iron bars still remaining in the window-frame, and dropped the coil, slowly and cautiously, outside. Then, with a wild prayer to Heaven, she crept out of the window, and, clinging to the knotted rope, swung herself out into the black and howling space.

It seemed to Beatriz that years and ages were passed in her descent from her prison to the ground. The wind tore at her swaying figure as with cruel hands. The rain bore down upon her in pelting torrents. The rope swayed with her light weight. Her hands clung desperately to the great rough knots, and it seemed as if her weak wrists and weak muscles must give way and she be precipitated to the earth. And then she fancied that her enemies were waiting for her below—that every foot of descent brought her nearer to them—and her heart beat with great, suffocating throbs, and the thick darkness covered her eyes.

It was a terrible experience, but foot by foot she neared the solid earth.

The rope swayed more and more with her weight, and suddenly gave way or became unfastened at the top, and she went heavily down.

She had a fall of only two or three feet, but she fell prostrate, and so lay for some moments, the rope coiling around her like a serpent. Finding that she was unhurt, she arose at last to her feet, and stood quite still, endeavouring to look around her.

She could see nothing. She must grope her way to the wall as best she could, for her keenest glances could not detect its outline.

Remembering its height, and that the gates must be locked, she picked up her rope, thinking that it might possibly prove of use in scaling the outer enclosure.

Then, with one hand against the old stone chateau, she advanced through the gloom for some distance and abruptly turned the angle of the building.

Here she paused and hesitated.

A light streamed out from a window scarcely a foot farther on. From her halting-place the girl, by bending forward, could look into the big old drawing-room.

She did so.

The old-fashioned apartment was long and low and very gloomy in its black wainscoting, its dark carpet, its faded brown chairs. Candles burned on the high mantelpiece. Before the cavernous hearth, as at an earlier hour of the same evening, the three Brandes, father, mother and son, sat together, plotting in whispers against the liberty—the life even—of that crouching girl outside in the storm.

They were the nearest—the only—relatives of poor Beatriz. She feared and hated them all alike. Seeing them now, with the red glow of the fire-shine on their faces, she watched them with a sense of fascination.

Mrs. Brand sat at one corner of the hearth, which was heaped with peat or other fuel in square brick shape, her cruel, arrogant face turned towards her husband, who sat opposite her.

Colonel Brand presented a strong contrast to his portly wife. He was thin, with sharp, hatchet features, a low, retreating forehead, small black, ferret eyes, a long, thin nose, and a heavy beard. There was something decidedly sinister in his appearance. He seemed to be a man who would stop at nothing where his own interests were concerned.

The son, Randal Brand, sat between the two, his face half-turned towards the windows. He was the worthy son of his parents. He was not ill-looking, but there was that in his countenance that would have made a keen observer fear him. He was about five-and-twenty; his face was large, round, smooth-shaven, and singularly yellow in tint; his small eyes, set under overhanging brows, gleamed like serpents' eyes; his massive jaws were square, and firmly set; and his wide, heavy mouth, with hanging under-lip, had a cruel, greedy expression. He was not tall, but was heavily built. His appearance, to one versed in the study of human nature, was emphatically that of a dangerous man.

This was the husband her relatives had chosen for poor, noble, innocent Beatriz! This the husband whom they offered her as the only alternative of death!

The girl thrilled with her anger and repugnance. She trembled lest those hateful eyes should spy her in the blackness outside. She started back and began a hasty retreat across the paved courtyard, her eyes fixed upon the light streaming from the window.

Before she had begun to speculate upon the posi-

tion of the garden wall she had come upon it with some force. She had not yet put on her gloves, and her bare and bleeding hand came in contact with the bricks. That contact thrilled her.

On the other side of the wall lay freedom and comparative safety. If she could only reach it!

She moved along like a shadow until she came to the gate. It was locked, as she expected, and the key was gone.

Nothing remained but to attempt to scale the enclosure.

Remembering the bent poker, she attached it to the rope.

While she halted there deliberating, the rope ladder in her hands, a sudden sound of terror smote upon her hearing—the barking of a watchdog.

For a moment she stood paralyzed. The sound grew louder—nearer!

The dog was bounding towards her through the storm and blackness!

No time for delay, for shrinking, for crouching in the shadows!

With a rapidity and quick-wittedness born of her desperate situation, she took the hook-like iron attached to her ladder in her hand and flung it up in the air.

It fell back upon her.

She threw it up again—again—and yet again.

The dog was coming nearer, his angry barks filling the air. Oh, Heaven, must she be discovered now?

Again the bent iron went whizzing through the air. The hook caught in the top of the wall. Merciful Heaven, it was fast and firm! The knotted rope hung straight and taut in her grasp.

But how near the dog was now.

Beatrice clutched the rope with frantic energy; she climbed it, hand over hand, in an agony of terror; she stood upon the summit of the wall.

And now the dog was almost beneath her, and his clamour was arousing the inmates of the chateau.

The girl crouched low on her perilous perch, and, catching up the knotted rope, flung it upon the outward side of the enclosure. Then she descended it swiftly and gained the ground.

And not too soon.

As she sped over the narrow road, not knowing even that it was a road, and kept within its bounds by the low hedge that bordered it on either side, sounds of confusion came from the chateau. She fancied that the dog increased its noise, that doors opened and shut, and that voices were calling through the night.

She was right. The barking of the watch dog had inspired the Branda with the fear that some intruder was within the chateau grounds. No one could enter them clandestinely from without.

Colonel Brand, with a sudden fear, sped up the stairs with the key to the prisoner's room in his hand.

He opened her door. The prisoner had flown.

And then came swift pursuit.

Beatrice, already some rods away, heard them coming. To be overtaken would be death, or worse than death. She sped on like a mad creature. Did she feel weak? She had the strength of a lioness, it seemed. Was she faint from the long fasting? Ah! every nerve was keenly strung, was tense and firm. Her feet seemed winged. Safety, life before her—death, or that worse fate, behind her.

She flew on in the storm, and after her came her enemies.

Her fatigues strength was fleeting. A mile of distance, and she grew weak with startling suddenness. Her feet seemed weighted. She could run no longer. Her heart beat to suffocation. With a wild cry of despair she fell by the grassy roadside.

And now through the gloom and lessening rain she heard plainly her pursuers.

They had put horses to a vehicle and were following her at hot speed.

How swiftly they came! The hoarse voices seemed to stun her. The glare of their great red lamps illumined the road on both sides of them as they hurried towards her! A minute more and they would be upon her!

"Oh, Heaven!" the very soul of tortured Beatrice cried out in her agony. "I am lost! I am lost!"

(To be continued.)

BIRTHS AND DEATHS IN LONDON.—The births of 121,394 children were registered in London during the fifty-two weeks ending Saturday, January 2. This total shows an excess of 3,971 over the fifty-two weekly returns made in 1873, and it exceeds the total for 1864 by 19,207, so rapidly do the births increase. The births in London in 1874 exceeded the registered deaths by 43,788; and this number, of course, represents the natural growth of the popula-

tion of the metropolis in a year, immigration and emigration being disregarded. It thus appears that 393 children were born in London daily, nearly 14 in every hour, or 1 under every five minutes. The deaths of 76,606 persons were returned as having been registered within the metropolitan area during the fifty-two weeks ending Jan. 2. The annual rate of mortality for the past year was, therefore, 22.6, which nearly coincides with that of 1873, when the rate stood at 22.5. In the year 1872 a lower rate prevailed—namely, 21.6 per 1,000 inhabitants; but, with the exception of 1872 and 1873, it is necessary to travel as far back as 1860 to find as good a death-rate as that presented for 1874, the rate for 1860 having been 22.5. The mean death-rate for the thirty-four years 1840-73 stands at 24.3. The Registrar-General points out in his report for 1873 that the London death with for registration purposes includes 78,080 acres, and the population resides at a mean elevation of 85 ft. above Trinity high-water mark, varying from 11 ft. below high-water mark in Plumstead Marshes to 429 feet above high-water mark in Hampstead. The number of inhabited houses was 417,767 in 1871, and the rateable value was then assessed at a trifle under twenty millions sterling.

SCIENCE.

DYEING WITH ANILINE BLACK.—According to a process, patented in France, the articles are first steeped for two hours in a solution of 6 pounds of iron in 20 pounds of hydrochloric acid and 2½ gallons of water, after addition of enough water to bring it to 12 deg. Baumé. They are then exposed to the air for 12 hours, and are finally dyed by heating them in a water bath, in a closed cylindrical vessel capable of turning on an axis first to 85 deg. and then gradually up to 132 deg. at the close of the operation, in an aniline-salt solution prepared for 66 pounds of stuff, of 6.6 pounds of aniline and 11 pounds of hydrochloric acid, to which a solution of 4.6 pounds of chlorate of potash in 8 gallons of water has been added. The development of the colour requires 8 to 5 hours, and it is fixed with bichromate of potash, and the goods are finally drawn through an oil bath.

THE STEEL TOOL QUESTION.—In forging bring the steel to a mellow heat, and keep it so until you have your tool forged to shape. As the heat declines to black hot compact your steel by light hammering on the face of the tool, but do not hammer the tool edge-wise. Now if the tool is ready to harden, when it is heated it will swell so as to loosen up the compacting that was done by light hammering as it was cooling off. So it follows that whatever will harden the steel at the least heat will do it the best. Use strong cold brine near the fire so as to utilize all the heat in the tool. As soon as the tool is cool, dip it in oil (sperm or whale oil preferable). Now hold the tool over a small burnt-down fire, without the wind on. Hold the tool so as to retain as much of the oil on it as possible. Now tip it up slightly so as to make the oil flow from over the hottest part to the edge. The oil becomes a carrier of heat, and will help to let down the temper (exactly alike every time) from any thick part to a delicate cutting edge. The colour that comes on the steel under hot oil can be depended upon much more with than without oil, although it (the colour) will be a little tardy. In letting down the temper do it slow enough at last, so that you may lay down the tool to cool off, and not have to dip again. But if it is going too low invert it and dip the body part and leave the edge out.

THE CAUSE OF EARTHQUAKES AND VOLCANOS.

The various relations and points of connection between volcanic phenomena, earthquakes, and lines of mountain elevation imply that they are the results of the play of one set of cosmic forces which have been brought into operation by the gradual cooling of the earth from an incandescent sun-like state to its present condition. The new theory is as follows:—As the cooling of the earth proceeded the crust gradually thickened and contracted less and less as the temperature became lowered. The hotter nucleus, on the other hand, contracted more, being at a higher temperature than the crust, and having a higher coefficient of contraction for equal loss of heat. By this process, which is still going on, the crust of the earth would shrink at one rate, and the vastly hotter central portion at another and greater rate; and cavities would be formed between the crust and the nucleus, cavities which would be inevitably filled by the crushing down of the solid crust on the more swiftly contracting nucleus by the force of gravitation, which is sufficient to crush the hardest rocks; and as the solid crust follows the shrinking nucleus—the force expended in mutual crushing and dislocation of its parts is transformed into heat,

by which, at the points of crushing, the rocks are heated into fusion. The access of water to such points determines volcanic eruptions. These points of crushing may occur at various depths in the solid crust. The annual amount of heat lost by radiation into space, is sufficient to liquify 777 cubic miles of ice into water at 32 deg. The actual amount of annual contraction is estimated at a reduction of three-fifths of an inch, an amount too small to be measured by any astronomical method, and yet more than enough to produce all the volcanic phenomena now to be observed on the surface of the earth.

How we swing and hang the balance on the pivot "If." If we were rich instead of poor, into what manifold blessings should our gold resolve itself! How those dear to us, deserving yet never possessing aught of this world's luxury, should revel in the pleasures and comforts, small and great, that gold can buy. If the demon anger had not burst his bonds one day, the hasty words would have remained unspoken, and we should still possess that which cannot be regained—a friendship lost. If we had but waited one little day, ere penning the letter whose every word was bitterness—the letter which reached its destination but too safely, bearing on its white wings wounds sharper than steel can give—what wild self-reproaches and what bitter tears of regret would have been saved us! We are tired of this old home, beneath the shadow of whose roof-tree we have dwelt for so many years. If we could only go out into the great, busy, bustling world, see what others have seen, and do what others have done! If we might only hope to win name and fame! There are mountains, we know, so lofty and magnificent that these puny hills stretching around us would sink into mere foothills beside them. If we could but journey towards them now, after patient toiling reach them, rest in shadow of their base awhile, and afterwards ascend until we gained the dazzling summit!

If there were only more of sun, and less of cloud, on our pathway! It is too sultry. If it would only rain! It is too cold. If the sun would shine brighter! If we could only be content with what we have and are!

If flowers bloomed, and mother earth were her robe of green all the year round—if we could always be in good temper—if people never criticised or found fault with other people—if no sharp words were uttered—if friends never turned to foes—if we were all as good and kind and loving as it lies in our power to be—what a sunny paradise we might make of our world!

VOLUNTEERS IN GREAT BRITAIN.—An abstract issued from the War Office shows that, according to the annual returns up to the 1st of November last, the maximum establishment of volunteers in Great Britain was 236,685, subdivided thus:—Light horse, 995; artillery, 42,026; engineers, 6,410; mounted rifles, 300; rifles, 183,473; and staff of administrative regiments, not included in the returns of any corps, 1,481. The number of supernumeraries authorized was 3,252. The officers numbered 161,100, of whom 80,827 belonged to artillery and 122,492 to rifle corps. The total number of men enrolled was 175,887, viz.:—Light horse, 556; artillery, 33,550; engineers, 6,601; mounted rifles, 175; rifles, 133,323; and staff, 1,482. The number of officers and sergeants who had obtained certificates of proficiency is 14,152; and the total number of volunteers present at the last annual inspection was 139,858.

THE HORSE-POWER OF THE WORLD.—Dr. Engel, director of the Prussian Statistical Bureau, has been making estimates on such statistical data as are available of the total horse-power of steam engines in the world, as every country has tolerably correct railroad statistics. Dr. Engel thinks that the following returns with reference to locomotives are not far from right:—United States, 1873, 14,223; Great Britain, 1872, 10,938; Zollverein, 1871, 5,927; Russia, 1876, 2,684; Austria, 1878, 2,369; Hungary, 1869, 506; France, 1869, 4,983; East Indies, 1872, 1,828; Italy, 1872, 1,172; Holland, 1872, 331; Belgium, 1870, 371; Switzerland, 1868, 225; Egypt, 1870, 212; Sweden, 1872, 185; Denmark, 1865, 39; Norway, 1871, 84. Total 45,467. It may be assumed that there are still four or five thousand additional locomotives in countries from which no statistics have been received, so that something like fifty thousand engines of that description, of an aggregate of 10,000,000-horse power, are now in use. Dr. Engel estimates all the engines in use, locomotive, marine, and stationary, about 14,400,000-horse power.

THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF SHROPSHIRE.—The death of Viscount Hill places another Lord-Lieutenancy—that of Shropshire—at the disposal of Mr. Disraeli.

According to the expectations of the political clubs of the party, the appointment will be conferred upon the Earl of Powis, a long and steady supporter of the Conservative cause, and a very large landholder in the county. Failing the earl's desire to accept the office and its duties, it is deemed likely that it may pass to Major-General Lord Forester, who, in addition to great wealth enjoyed in right of his wife, has just inherited the extensive family estates in Shropshire. Viscount Hill is succeeded in honours and possessions by his eldest son, now in his forty-third year. The new peer married, in 1858, the daughter of Mr. W. Maddox, by whom he has two sons, but the marriage was not made public until after the death of his wife about a year ago. Curiously enough, a similar reticence occurred regarding the marriage of his father, the deceased peer, who had been united to the wealthy Miss Olegg some two years before the marriage was publicly acknowledged.

OVER THE WATER.

GRETCHEN HELBIG walked home very slowly, with her pretty hazel eyes fixed straight before her. "The unfortunate never look behind them," says Hugo; "they are but too sure that misery follows them."

And this young girl was already very unfortunate. Her father had died a year ago, a month before she finished her course at school. Her mother had been left in poverty with six children.

They had moved from the house where they had lived all their lives, to a smaller one, and Madame Helbig had contrived to pay the rent by giving music lessons and by what Gretchen made by teaching German to some children who lived in the neighbourhood.

Two of the boys were old enough to go to work also—Heinrich supporting himself in a wholesale warehouse, and August earning a little money already in a bank. But neither was able to contribute to the home fund. Emil, Sophie and Elise were mere children.

Heinrich was nineteen and the eldest, and there were two years' difference between each of them.

In truth, they were miserably poor.

Gretchen is on her way home now from a scholastic institution, where she had been applying for a teacher's place. But mademoiselle has no vacancies. Her instruction, as Gretchen knows, is chiefly given by professors, and mademoiselle prefers French and English governesses to German, when she employs them at all to keep order in the dormitories and assist her in the school government.

"My child, why do you not try to obtain a situation away from home?" mademoiselle said, finally. "I can recommend you from the bottom of my heart. I have always been proud of you as a pupil. The wife of a wealthy merchant was here yesterday, applying for a governess to go abroad with her. She offers a salary of one hundred pounds a year to a thoroughly competent governess—one who can teach French, German, music, drawing, and the ordinary branches of education. I thought of you, and I mentioned your name. I told her I knew no one better qualified for the situation. She hesitated when I told her you were only seventeen. Her elder daughter—you would have two pupils—is fourteen already. But you might call upon her."

As Gretchen made no reply mademoiselle went on.

"You could send your mother home at least one-half your salary, Gretchen."

"Yes, and that would more than pay for the rent; let me see—the rent and our servant's wages, and help-clothes the children."

"Go to see Mrs. Reeves, and tell her you are the young lady I recommended."

At this juncture a knock was heard at the door and a modest, anxious mamma entered the room, with a little girl, awe-struck at being admitted to the presence of her future preceptor.

Gretchen sighs and rises. Her audience is at an end. She has been fortunate at having secured one for even this length of time. She waits until the new arrival is seated, then she makes her adieux. Little mademoiselle, with her keen, shrewd face, holds out a soft hand with the air of a princess; then Gretchen goes.

It is from this interview she is returning now. She is planning another with Mrs. Reeves. But she will go home first and report herself; it is their dinner hour.

They are already at dinner when she enters. Gretchen is too much excited to eat much, although mutton boiled to order, eaten with sweet raisin sauce, is a very popular dish with the Helbigs. Even balls of apples and potatoes mixed fail to tempt her. She hurries off immediately again. She tells her mother

that she wants to take a walk before four o'clock, when she gives the Claudes a lesson.

Mrs. Reeves lives at Victoria House, and Gretchen finds her superintending the packing of a box of pictures.

"Miss Helbig? Ah, yes, the young lady Mademoiselle Vernon mentioned," Mrs. Reeves said, coming forward.

A very elegant woman, is Gretchen's comment; tall, pale, massive, with a marked repose of manner.

She wore a walking-dress of green silk, of a shade which, if startling, was of the then mode. And she wore diamonds in her ears and at her throat, in spite of the hour of the day that it was. She looked at Gretchen with an penetrating glance as mademoiselle's own, and she made up her mind that she would answer.

"A nice, good, quiet girl. Rather young, but with no airs," she pronounced her.

Gretchen stated her errand.

"I had about given up my search," Mrs. Reeves said. "I shall be glad if we can come to an understanding. You look young; how old are you?"

"Seventeen."

"An orphan?"

"My mother is living."

"And she is willing to part with you?"

"It is a necessity."

"Are you sure you will not mind being perhaps very far away from your present home? You are a young girl, out of school only a year or so; have you a lover, who will be writing to you, making you homesick?"

Mrs. Reeves, as she said this, examined her diamond rings, but her tone was business-like and nonchalant.

Gretchen was so young and so accustomed to be treated authoritatively that she did not resent all these questions; in fact, she regarded them as a part of the terms of her engagement.

"No, I am not betrothed," she said, simply, with a sweet blush that ran up to the roots of her chestnut hair, and she lifted at the same time her clear hazel eyes to Mrs. Reeves's handsome, impassive face.

The conversation took place in French. The workmen meanwhile went on hammering up their boxes.

Presently two girls of eleven and twelve entered.

"Cornelia, Margaret, this is a young lady who will, I think, go with us to Montreal," their mother said.

In fact, this seemed to be almost an established fact by the time Gretchen rose to go.

"I forgot to mention," Mrs. Reeves said, suddenly, "that I leave on Monday, and this is Wednesday. Can you make your preparations by that time? It will be impossible for us to postpone our departure."

"I must talk to my mother about it. I will let you know. I will send you a note this evening."

And she went.

She excused herself from giving her lesson to the little Claudes, and instead held a family council with her mother.

It went very hard with Madame Helbig to consent to such a separation; but they were frightfully poor, and this offer of Mrs. Reeves seemed to be a very liberal one. In a year or two the boys would probably make more money; then Gretchen would come home again.

In the meantime—yes, in the meantime—Gretchen could go.

But this consent was not given until Madame Helbig had carried her anxious face and her heavy heart to Mademoiselle Vernon, and had heard from her that Mrs. Reeves was undoubtedly a woman of position and respectability.

Madame Helbig herself went to Victoria House with Gretchen, to say that her daughter would go. She was pleased with Mrs. Reeves—her beauty, the sort of regal manner she carried with her. And Mr. Reeves was substantial worth itself, an unpretending gentleman, who, when they parted, assured Mrs. Helbig that he would care for Gretchen as though she were his own.

They sailed on the day appointed. Mrs. Helbig went with them, and kissed her treasure good-bye on the deck of the vessel. Gretchen had not known until then how terrible the parting would be—to see that precious pale face disappear slowly from her sight; to know that that night, nor the next, nor any night for long months to come, could she clasp that dear form, kiss those tender lips, hold that faithful hand! Tears and speech forsook her. She sat huddled in a corner of the deck in speechless agony.

Fortunately no one disturbed her. Mrs. Reeves was taken violently seasick as soon as the vessel began to move out of the harbour; and when Mrs. Reeves was ill Mr. Reeves was obliged to be in very close attendance upon her.

The French lady's-maid and the two little girls

retired to the apartment which they were to share together, and, amid much disputing and skylarking arranged their goods and chattels for the voyage.

Hours passed; no one remembered Gretchen, and she, in the apathy of her grief, had almost forgotten herself. But a violent lurch of the vessel forced her to change her position; she rose to her feet, but was pitched violently forward against a passenger who was promenading the deck. He caught her and guided her to a seat.

"Thank you," she said, in German.

His German was broken exceedingly as he said:

"You look ill. Are you going to faint? Will you have a glass of wine—or water?"

"No; it is my head. I shall be better presently."

"Do you speak English? Ah, we shall get on better in that case. Shall I tell you what it is you want? It is something to eat. I did not see you either at the dinner or supper table. You are faint with hunger."

"Is that it?" asked Gretchen, helplessly.

"May I prescribe for you? I will see the steward and order something appetizing and a glass of wine."

Gretchen was helpless through weakness. She could only look up gratefully.

Presently, after having disposed of the tempting refreshment brought by her new-found friend, Gretchen started guiltily, and said:

"I wonder where Mrs. Reeves is? I ought to go to her."

"I met Mr. Reeves a moment or so ago, and put the same question to him. Permit me to introduce myself, or rather here is my card, and I'll strike a match for you to read it by. Charles Almy, you see."

"And I am Margaret Helbig. I am Mrs. Reeves's governess."

"Which recalls my story. I met Mr. Reeves, and told him where you were. He was looking for you. I related to him how you had been on the point of fainting; how I had offered my services; how you were seated on deck, where I had ordered your supper to be taken to you. He was satisfied. His wife is seasick, and requires his services. He appeared to be relieved when I assured him I would do all you would permit me to do for you."

Gretchen was a shy girl, little used to the world and its ways; above all, little used to men of the world. But it was impossible not to be reassured by Mr. Almy. His easy frankness, the touch of humour in his tone, his sympathy, all told in his favour. Gretchen had had a sudden misgiving that she had been guilty of an imprudence. She felt no longer any such misgiving. Mr. Almy was a friend of Mr. Reeves, and Mr. Reeves had sent her a message through him. She surrendered herself to the satisfaction of being wrapped up in a wonderful bear-skin which her new friend produced, by means of which the chill of the night air was successfully kept at bay. Conversation she was quite unequal to; and, seeing this, Mr. Almy left her and betook himself presently to his promenade once more, enlivened by a cigar.

Finally Gretchen rose to find her way below, when he instantly came forward and offered her his arm; he had been on the alert all the while, and was prompt in offering her the needful service.

Gretchen, instead of sleeping, pitched and tossed all night with the ship; consequently she overslept the breakfast hour, and when she did contrive to drag herself out of her berth and on deck she found that almost every one was there before her; Mrs. Reeves among the number, looking like a beautiful waxen image as she lay propped up by cushions.

"You look pale. Have you been seasick?"

"No; I am sorry you have been, Mrs. Reeves."

"I always am. It is incredible how I can nerve myself to take these voyages. Ah, Carl, good morning. Allow me to present you to my young friend, Mr. Almy, Miss Helbig."

Mr. Almy did not say that he already had had that honour, although Gretchen fully expected it of him. He bowed profoundly, and remarked on the wind and weather.

"Mr. Almy and I have met before," Gretchen said. "He was very kind to me last night."

"Ah! How was that?"

Gretchen narrated the fact.

Mr. Almy strolled off again at the conclusion of the story.

"Pray be careful, Miss Helbig; how you make acquaintances," Mrs. Reeves remarked. "You must know that a young girl cannot be too prudent. Mr. Almy was all very well, but there are all sorts of people in the world."

Part of which exordium Mr. Almy overheard as he was returning.

"Don't scold her, Mrs. Reeves," he said, taking a seat between the two. "It was my fault. I insisted upon being spoken to."



[A NEW FRIEND.]

Whereupon he proceeded to make himself agreeable—an art which he had acquired to perfection. He was singularly handsome also, as Gretchen discovered by the light of day; what is generally known as Spanish-looking—tall, dark-skinned, dark-eyed, dark-moustached. In a sombrero and a cape he would have made the typical cavalier.

Gretchen had been disposed to like him immensely as it was; her gratitude was now reinforced by her admiration. Like most young girls she was impressionable. The outward man carried due or undue weight with her.

It transpired in the course of conversation that Mr. Almy and Mrs. Reeves were very old friends and cousins.

They talked before Gretchen with the most entire unreserve about places they had visited and people they had known.

"Do you remember the evening I sang in the 'Giovanni,' in the San Carlo theatre at Naples?" he asked, presently, and Mrs. Reeves nodded assent.

A surprised look on Miss Helbig's face arrested the rest of Mr. Almy's speech.

"I have done such things," he said. "I sing for my living, you must know."

Then he pulled out a note book, from which he drew a programme of an opera. Signor Carlo Almi's name stood over against the tenor role.

"You seem to me like—an artist," Gretchen said, returning to him.

"Yes, I am afraid I have acquired the professional swagger."

"Carl, my head aches so terribly," moaned his cousin, at this juncture, "I think that if you and Miss Helbig want to talk, I must trouble you to move away."

She closed her eyes and looked more than ever like a marble image.

Gretchen started remorsefully, and gathered up her shawl to move on. She was a little in awe of

Mrs. Reeves, besides being a little in awe of all invalids.

Another girl would perhaps have pitied the sufferer, and suggested ologne or ammonia or ice-water. Poor Gretchen, however, merely felt herself grow awkward and disposed to beat a retreat. If she had known Mr. Almy better, she would have read aright his look of amusement; it was at least a second before an expression of sympathy struggled to the surface.

He hesitated.

"Can I do anything for you, Meta? Do you want these pillows altered? It is no trouble, I assure you. I am sorry we have disturbed you. Good-bye, then, for the present."

In truth, there was nothing left for him to do, as it happened, not to follow Miss Helbig's move; had Gretchen not risen it may be he would have remained by his cousin's side in respectful silence.

Mrs. Reeves exercised a potent influence over many persons, this cousin Carl, as she chose to call him, among the number.

However, he submitted to his banishment with an excellent grace. To tell the truth, he had taken a fancy to this demure, well-behaved little German girl. He was attracted by her simplicity, her apparent goodness. His feminine acquaintances had hitherto been either among actresses or else among women of the world of fashion. The latter had had independence and dash developed, perhaps to too great an extent. When Sterne called "vivacity" the fault of his age did he mean the licence of speech and action which is apparently the peculiarity of this? But Gretchen Helbig had certainly not this fault; she was cultivated, maybe to the extent of her capacity, but equally modest and unaffected.

They met on the common ground of the love of art; like most Germans, Gretchen had a passionate love of music, and had been cultivated to at least the average amateur standard. Moreover, a freemasonry was established between them from the fact that they

were both workers. Gretchen had her bread to earn, and she felt an especial sympathy for all who were under the same necessity. He told her of his past. He had been left an orphan at six years old. Then his uncle had adopted him, and had begun his education, with the avowed intention of leaving his thousands to him. When his uncle had died after having failed in business he had again been thrown upon the world—this time nineteen years old. He had a strong musical taste, and more or less of Bohemian proclivity. Instead of going into business he decided to study for the stage on the few hundreds which remained to him out of the estate of his uncle. He had done so, and had now been on the boards for six years or so, with moderate success.

"My voice lacks volume," he said. "I shall do better in concert, and I am looking forward to making up a concert troupe as soon as I have fulfilled my present engagements. Curious, was it not, that my cousin, Mrs. Reeves, should have been bound to the antipodes at the same time that I was? It was purely accidental. We met by chance, and discovered that our paths lay in the same direction."

I have condensed the subject matter of several conversations into one. As a matter of course there was abundant opportunity to cultivate each other's acquaintance.

If the days sped by with monotonous swiftiness, they were nevertheless long days with little occupation or interest outside of conversation. To be sure, there was a piano in the cabin, and Mr. Almy was exceedingly obliging in the matter of singing. He discovered that Gretchen played accompaniments charmingly; and it usually required very little persuasion to embark him upon a long summer voyage of romances and bravuras. He had a sweet, flute-like voice; as he had admitted himself, not powerful, but wonderfully sympathetic. He was a great favourite on board; as, in truth, he had always been on other boards; his extreme beauty of physique overbalanced his artistic deficiencies.

Mrs. Reeves continued to suffer from seasickness, and dozed most of the time.

In her presence her cousin contrived to make the conversation general, or else offered to read aloud, generally some book of Mrs. Reeves's own choice, when Gretchen would talk with the children, who, however, held high holiday during the whole of the voyage, eschewing any attempt on the part of their governess to begin lessons until they arrived at their destination. Neither did Mr. Reeves favour her with much of his society; he was invariably kind and polite, but beyond that absorbed in books, pamphlets, or newspapers.

He and his wife appeared to have very little in common; she was exacting to a degree, and he treated her like a spoiled child, humouring her every caprice. But having once established her on a couch of rugs, shawls and cushions, he appeared to be perfectly satisfied to leave her to be entertained by her handsome cousin.

Watching them, Gretchen often thought what a beautiful picture these two made. There was always something sumptuous about Mrs. Reeves's apparel and surroundings. She had jewels on her hands and in her ears, even when she was half-fainting with illness. At one time an ermine-lined velvet cap, at another an eastern scarf, superbly embroidered; always some costume which, if not appropriate, was, at least, exceedingly gorgeous. And Charles Almy's beauty was itself of that gorgeous order which suggests principalities and power.

Gretchen, watching them, thought what a well-matched couple they would have made. Also, with a woman's instinct, she divined that Mrs. Reeves liked to keep her handsome cousin in attendance on her.

Miss Helbig began to have a theory of her own on the subject. Mrs. Reeves had married for money and had never given her husband her heart.

One night Mr. Reeves stumbled up on deck to smoke a cigar, and ran against Charles Almy and his wife's little German governess leaning over the ship's side. They were talking in a suspiciously low and confidential tone of voice.

He instinctively betook himself to the other side of the ship.

The world is universally agreed upon leaving a fair field to lovers. But when he had finished his cigar, and had staggered down to the lower regions once more, he undertook to unburden his mind of his suspicions to his wife.

"Meta," he said, "there is no doubt in my mind that Charles Almy is making love to that little German girl. I hope he is in earnest. It would be a shame to flirt with a young lady who is not experienced in that sort of thing. But Charles is inveterate. I would not trust him!"

"What nonsense!" his wife said, sharply.

"Nonsense? How?"

"In the first place, I believe you are entirely mistaken. I don't think Charles dreams of a thing beyond airing his German or his French, or whichever he may be rusty in. As for the girl, if she is a little stupid let her suffer for her own folly. At all events, she won't be the first who has fallen in love with those melting dark eyes of Charles."

"My impression is she is a sensible girl, and will do no such thing unless Charles makes love to her in the first place. For the rest he might do worse."

"Charles is not a marrying man. The whole subject is absurd."

Mrs. Reeves had an annihilating way of administering a quietus, and this she had done now. Mr. Reeves betook himself to his slumbers. He was a wise man, and he had made up his mind some years ago that there was a point beyond which arguments with his wife were injudicious. Mrs. Reeves, however, was less fortunate. To tell the truth, she had already had suspicions of the very fact which her husband had boldly stated. But she had reasoned them down. Charles was over thirty, and at that age a man was not apt to marry in haste—to be carried away by an inconsiderate fancy; and only a very inconsiderate fancy would induce him to marry a girl like Gretchen Helbig—poor, and not even beautiful.

Doubts overtook Mrs. Reeves as to the accuracy of this description. Poor the girl undoubtedly was. But was she not an unusually agreeable, entertaining companion?

As to beauty, she was young and fresh. Mrs. Reeves herself, who had been a professed beauty for more years than she cared to remember, had learned to lay great stress upon these two advantages.

Her husband might be right after all. Oh, why had she brought her from her home? Why had she ever consented to—proposed such an arrangement?

She wrung her hands with an unconscious gesture as though they had been chained. Poor soul, at that moment she felt her chains.

Poor soul do I say? Do I expect you to pity her, if you have guessed her secret?

Meanwhile Gretchen and her companion are promenading the deck, slowly.

Mr. Reeves was right. Charles is playing the part of lover. For the first time in her life is Gretchen listening to the language of love. Charles Almy, however, makes up for her lack of experience. It would be an instructive problem in arithmetic to compute how many times before this he has conned the part he is now rehearsing for Gretchen's benefit, off the stage and on. He does the thing admirably by this time, and he has an artistic satisfaction in being aware of the fact. In this case, besides, he really believes himself to be in earnest.

As I said before, this simple little German girl has charmed him. She has appealed to that part of his nature which he had believed to have left behind him at his mother's knees. With her it has seemed easy to him to be good and honest and faithful. Moreover, he has reasoned the matter out, and he has convinced himself that Gretchen would make him a good wife. She had been brought up sensibly by a prudent German mother; she would doubtless make a prudent housewife. Besides, there was another point in her favour. Gretchen was musical; she really played his accompaniments exquisitely, better than any non-professional had ever done before.

If he carried out his present notion of getting up a concert troupe, she would be a very important member thereof. All these things must be taken into consideration.

As you see, he was worldly—very. His worldliness was ingrained; he could no more get away from it than he could get away from hunger and thirst.

But not a word breathed he of prudential considerations to Miss Helbig. He asked her to share his lot, and he talked of working for her and shielding her and cherishing her until the tears gathered in Gretchen's eyes.

"The dear God"—as the child-like phrase of her mother tongue ran—had been very good to her. He had sent this kind friend to her, to console her for the mother, parting from whom had so nearly broken her heart.

Of course she accepted him. "She laid her sweet hands in his, and trusted him"—and for the moment she imbued him with the spirit of her own faith and trust. As they stood on the deck of the ship in the pure starlight, the infinite heavens above them, the far-reaching waters about them, life suddenly took an unwonted aspect to him. It seemed more real, more earnest than it had ever done before. Something more like a prayer rose from his heart than had stirred its depths for years.

Meanwhile the engagement was to be kept a secret.

"I hate prying eyes to scrutinize our happiness," he said. "Do not let us tell even Meta. It will be time enough, when we are on shore, and our arrangements for your return home and our marriage there are made."

Gretchen acquiesced. She would have acquiesced in almost any proposition of his. He was her world. As long as they were together it mattered little to her who went or came, was grave or gay. She was utterly blinded to the fact that Mrs. Reeves grew more and more morose and cross.

To tell the truth Mrs. Reeves's keen eyes were not long in divining the state of the case. Her husband had aroused her fears, her sharpened observation confirmed them. But she was a woman of the world; she made no sign; she bided her time; she complained of headache, dyspepsia, fatigue, ennui, and so established a just claim to be morose. But she let Carl, as she called him, and Gretchen severely alone. She even rebuffed his occasional offers to read to her, to sing to her. She made no effort to recall him to his allegiance. Therefore Gretchen's cup of happiness knew no alloy.

For the last week of their voyage she and Mr. Almy were rarely apart. Music often supplied the place of conversation; they tried over and over again all the music Charles had with him, until the patience of their involuntary audience was sometimes nearly exhausted.

There was one seasick man, whose apartment, unfortunately, was at the head of the piano, who heaped maledictions upon them. But they were supremely indifferent or unconscious.

Charles had by this time communicated his concert-troupe scheme to Gretchen, with full details. How blissfully happy she was at the thought of working hand in hand with him.

They reached Montreal finally. Mr. Reeves had hired a house, to which they went immediately. It was a large, cheerful house surrounded by a garden, with a general air of comfort pervading it. They had arrived in the beginning of the winter; and a chilly season did they find it.

Mrs. Reeves moved heaven and earth to provide herself with adequate warmth.

Gretchen and the children settled down to their lessons, enveloped in shawls and winter wraps, and taking a frequent run in the garden for the express purpose of warming chilly feet and hands.

But poor Mr. Reeves was the greatest sufferer. He took a very severe cold, which he neglected, what with the cares of his household pressing upon him and the necessity of attending to his office duties.

They had not been a week in their new home before he was attacked with pneumonia. Doctors were called in, but the disease ran a fatal course, in spite of all they could do. Mr. Reeves died after a brief illness of ten days.

His wife showed a violent and hysterical—grief, shall I call it? She was the centre of interest and sympathy through her husband's illness, when she persistently anticipated the worst that could befall him; and she claimed at least half of the doctors' care and solicitude.

When the worst was over it seemed as though too much could not be done to soothe her agitated nerves; her daughters and Gretchen were kept in constant attendance; she had a talent for setting people to work on her behalf.

Finally the funeral horrors were over. I say horrors of intent, since there are cases when all the dignity and tenderness seem to be taken away from them, and nothing is left except the ghastly details.

Gretchen and her two pupils always looked back with a shudder to the time when there had been in the house a dark, cold room, from which a black case had been carried, containing the mystery that had once walked and talked among them.

From that day the name of the husband and father was rarely mentioned. Mrs. Reeves shrank with a nervous horror from any allusion to the subject; life to her meant this world's warmth and sunshine, purple and fine linen, dainty fare; it struck a chill to her soul to recall that these things might come to an end. She resented any reminder of this. And what reminder so irresistible as death?

She made up her mind to return to England by the next vessel. As to Gretchen, there was a hard, grudging feeling against the girl in her heart, which she now permitted herself to indulge.

She sent for the girl to communicate to her her plans. She had made up her mind that they should part. The sight of Gretchen's "primrose face" had grown to be positively hateful to her. She had come between her and Charles Almy.

In old times Charles had haunted her doors, whereas of late he had been barely civil in paying visits of sympathy and condolence; the children reported that he had joined Miss Helbig on several occasions when they had been out walking; and

this only made his neglect to call at the house more unpardonable in his cousin's eyes.

"I have been meaning to see you, but have not been equal to the effort of a business conversation for some time past, Miss Helbig," Mrs. Reeves began, in her usual impassive fashion, when Gretchen had taken a seat at a respectful distance from her couch, after having made formal inquiries as to her health. "I have engaged apartments for the girls and myself in the 'Ontario,' which sails on the twenty-third. This is the seventh. I thought it best to let you know in time, so that you may either return to England or else take another situation here, before we leave you—unprotected I was about to say, although the protection which one woman gives another is at best a poor thing."

Gretchen was thunderstruck. It had not occurred to her that Mrs. Reeves would part with her. And the proposed uprooting must be so sudden. She drew a long breath.

"Mrs. Reeves—I—have—no money," she said, with tears in her eyes.

"I made no written agreement with you, therefore I am not bound to you in any way," announced this keen business woman. "But, under the circumstances, I am willing to pay for your return passage to England; if you remain here, I pay you for your services up to the time we separate, as a matter of course. I offer you no advice. Indeed, that would be a work of supererogation to you. You have shown yourself abundantly able to take care of yourself."

Gretchen rose instantly. All the pride of her nature was roused.

"I will reflect and let you know what I decide to do, Mrs. Reeves," she said. "This has come upon me so suddenly that I cannot possibly give you an answer now."

Then she bowed and left the room, stung to the quick. What had she done to be cast off in this fashion?

Her first thought was of the man to whom she was betrothed. She wrote to him, asking his advice. She had had no jealous pang or misgivings at having seen very little of him lately, because she had known how very much occupied he had been with rehearsing and putting on the stage an opera in which he had appeared two nights already. Life just then would have seemed unendurable to her had she not had him to turn to for sympathy and assistance.

He replied to her letter in person, finding her alone, having finished her school duties for that day. To tell the truth, he prided himself upon having summoned sufficient courage to go through with this interview. It required courage. It devolved upon him to do a very disagreeable thing. Gretchen, certain of his sympathy, told her story. What should she do?

"I should say, without hesitation, return to your mother, my poor little unsophisticated child. You are unfitted to take care of yourself."

His tone, his look was tender. But why did he stop there? Were their plans separate and distant? Had he not, a hundred times, promised that henceforth he would take care of her?

She did not answer for a moment, but her clear, pure hazel eyes sought his inquiringly.

"My darling," he forced himself to say, "I will be perfectly frank with you. It has made me dreadfully unhappy lately that I have not been able to see my way clear to our marriage. If I only dared ask you—entreat you—to marry me now! But it would be a gross injustice to yourself. Therefore I give you the advice to return to your own safe home. Although so far away, we will be true to each other, and I will work with all my might to make a home which I can ask you to share with me."

"I can't bear to go home—to go back upon my mother again," said poor Gretchen. "I came away meaning to support myself, and if I return there will be the same thing to go over again." A pause. "No, I ought not to go. I hear that teachers are well paid here. If I can get a good place I will stay, and try to save up money to send to her. It was our plan that I was to stay away until Heinrich and August were doing better."

"Think well what you are undertaking. You are a young girl in a strange land."

She looked up at him with a sudden, sweet smile. "You will be here."

Poor thing! If it was an imprudent speech, she was speedily punished for it.

"No, I shall not be here. The business manager of the troupe I am with has changed his plans. We sail by the 'Ontario' the end of this month."

"So does Mrs. Reeves," was Gretchen's first thought and speech.

"I know it. She wrote to me to engage her apartments. I replied to her letter this morning, and have since learned that I am to be her fellow-passenger."

Gretchen sat with clasped hands, thinking, thinking. The earth seemed to be giving way, poor child, under her feet.

She would indeed be left a friendless stranger in a strange land if she stayed; and yet it might seem to be her duty to stay.

Thus indeed it proved. She went the next day to make inquiries at a large school of which she had already heard.

She discovered that she could find employment there, and that at an excellent salary, far better than she could hope for at home. Moreover, she would be given a home in the school. But, in spite of her success, it was with a heavy heart that she went back to Mrs. Reeves and told her that she had made up her mind to remain.

Mrs. Reeves accepted her decision with nonchalance. If she was startled at the change which twenty-four hours of care and anxiety had made in the girl's appearance, at least she did not tell her so.

Mr. Almy came in while they were concluding their conference, and to him Mrs. Reeves confided Miss Helbig's plan.

She did so purposely. She wanted to see what effect it would have upon Charles. But he disappointed her; he showed only the due amount of interest, and when Gretchen rose presently and left the room he let her go without adding a word.

Nor did he seek her out between that and the time of his leaving until the day before the "Ontario" left. Then he called at the school where, by that time, Gretchen had become domesticated, to bid her good-bye, but found she had gone out. He left his card, with a conventional phrase of farewell written upon it.

Gretchen took up the card, and read it with the eyes of her soul as well as with the tired hazel eyes we wet of. He was gone. These few words were their farewell to each other, perhaps for ever. They would never be anything more to each other again. She could not have reasoned out this conviction to you but she knew it all the same.

And so it was. Charles Almy never wrote to her again. But within six months she learned he was married—to Mrs. Reeves. She never quite understood that; she had not our insight into motives and character; perhaps it was only in after years that her wider experience taught her how his selfish, worldly nature had yielded to the spell of her stronger, more determined one.

Her mother never knew of all this. Gretchen wrote persistently and cheerfully home. She related how Mrs. Reeves had returned to England upon her husband's death, but how she herself had decided to remain at Montreal. She made the best of everything; and best of all, as she thought, she was able to send home regular remittances of money.

Was she happy? Poor child, at first living was sorry work. She was fortunately so constantly occupied that she had no time for thought. She did her duty with all her might, not daring to look beyond. She saw no home faces, heard no word of home speech, until one evening at a school-concert, where the principal of the school, Mrs. Flint, introduced her to a young lady, a stranger whom she was anxious to impress favorably with the school; she had sisters or cousins who were still toiling up the hill of learning, whom it would be well to obtain as pupils.

Gretchen and Mrs. Lawrie talked diligently about Montreal and the country generally. Mrs. Lawrie had only just arrived at what she expected to be her home for some years. Presently a fair, blue-eyed young man joined her; she presented him directly to Gretchen:

"A countryman of your father, Miss Helbig, Mr. Von Lindenberg."

And it was with him that Gretchen exchanged a welcome greeting—the first in months.

Mrs. Lawrie possessed a talent for languages, and for a while joined in the conversation; but her husband came for her presently to go with him to look at Mr. Flint's conservatory; and then Gretchen and Mr. Von Lindenberg were left on tête-à-tête. He was a Prussian, but he had been in England, and he knew friends of hers there. How delightful it was to compare notes about them!

Gretchen brightened into something very like her old happy self. She responded warmly to Mrs. Lawrie's cordial invitation to her to visit her socially when they parted that evening. She began to think that, after all, some brightness and pleasure might be left in life.

In fact, her first pleasant experiences in Canada dated from that time.

She went to Mrs. Lawrie's in the course of a few days, and found the house such a pleasant one, the people so unaffected, so cordial, so charming, that she was very grateful to be able to go there often. In that way she met Mr. Von Lindenberg again. After-

wards he dared Mrs. Flint's closely guarded portals, and from that time forth came to see Gretchen constantly. With him it was a trite case of love at first sight.

Gretchen liked him very much always. In the end she loved him. He was so utterly unlike her other lover, so curiously simple and sterling and genuine, that there was no possibility of comparing the two. Had they been more alike, had Gustav Von Lindenberg possessed any artistic gifts, had he had any pretensions to being a fascinating man, Gretchen might have resisted him longer, doubted him, wanted to prove. But he was cast in an entirely different mould. Shall I say that he was another self, coming to her with a sympathy and a tenderness for what she had suffered, all the keener because he understood her so perfectly.

But Gretchen held out on one point at least. She refused to be married until Heinrich and August had assumed the entire responsibility of their mother's support. Then, reader, she yielded and was married from Mrs. Lawrie's house. This was sensible, if a trifle unconventional.

Afterwards she returned to England as a bride on her wedding tour.

M. M. L.

KEEP STRAIGHT AHEAD.

Pay no attention to slanderers or gossip-mongers. Keep straight in your course, and let their backbitings die the death of neglect. What is the use of lying awake at night, brooding over the remark of some false friend, that runs through your brain like forked lightning? What's the use of fretting over a piece of gossip that has been set afloat to your disadvantage by some meddling busybody who has more time than character? These things can't possibly injure you, unless indeed you take notice of them and in combating them give them character and standing.

If what is said about you is true, set yourself right at once; if it is false, let it go for what it will fetch. If a bee stings you would you go to the hive and destroy it. Would not a thousand come upon you? It is wisdom to say little respecting the injuries you have received. We are generally losers in the end if we stop to refute all backbitings and gossipings we may hear by the way. They are annoying, it is true, but not dangerous, so long as we do not stop to expostulate and sulk. Our characters are formed and sustained by ourselves, and by our own actions and purposes and not by others. Let us always bear in mind that "calumniators may usually be trusted to time and the slow but steady justice of public opinion."

THE LATE IRISH CHURCH.—The following figures represent the amount of assets left by archbishops and bishops of the late Irish Church from 1820 to 1840, but this sum does not include real property that the deceased may have purchased, nor any settlements he may have made on members of his family, nor any stock he may have transferred to avoid legacy duty, or possibly to avoid the fame of having died too rich for the bishop of the poor Church:—

Archbishop Fowler, Dublin	£150,000
Archbishop Beresford, Tuam	250,000
Archbishop Agar, Cashel	400,000
Archbishop Stuart, Armagh	300,000
Archbishop Broderick, Cashel	80,000
Bishop Trevelyan, Tuam	73,846
Bishop Alexander, Meath	73,000
Bishop Tottenham Loftus, Clogher	60,000
Archbishop Lawrence, Cashel	55,000
Bishop Bisset, Raphoe	46,000
Archbishop Magee, Dublin	45,000
Archbishop Whately, Dublin	40,000
Bishop Leslie, Kilmore	40,000
Bishop Bulston, Kilmalee	40,000
Bishop Knox, Derby	100,000
Archbishop Plunket, Tuam	28,381
Archbishop Stewart, Armagh	25,000
Bishop O'Brien, Meath	20,000
Bishop Kyle, Cork	20,000
Bishop Stopford, Meath	25,000
Bishop Percy, Down	40,000
Bishop Cleaver, Ferns	50,000
Bishop Bernard, Limerick	60,000
Bishop Hawtorn, Raphoe	250,000
Bishop Porter, Clogher	250,000

£2,621,177

ANCIENT ENGLISH WEIGHTS.—The Warden of the Standards, in his report on the financial year 1872-3, stated that an ancient pound weight, probably of the time of Henry III. or Edward I., was found in 1842 in the old pyx chamber in the cloister of Westminster Abbey, adding:—"This old weight and some others were delivered into the custody of the late Superintendent of Weights and Measures at

the Exchequer, but unfortunately no trace of any of them can now be found." The warden now reports that one of these curious old weights has since been found at the late superintendent's private residence and has been delivered into the custody of the warden. It is a small, flat, circular weight of copper, marked with two dots as if of the weight of two grains, and is enclosed in an ancient box of elegant shape, in the form of an urn, turned in boxwood. The box is inscribed with ink, in handwriting of the time from Henry III. to Edward I., "Grana pro aure." The weight is in excellent preservation, and evidently of very nearly its original weight. It now weighs 1.869 imperial avoirdupois or troy grain, showing the single grain to be equal to 0.935 imperial grain. It would seem that either the troy grain when first introduced into this country was of somewhat less weight than at a later period or that this old two-grain weight must have been deficient in true weight about 0.131 grain.

FACTIÆ.

A HINT.

"I wish I was a pudding, mamma."

"Why?"

"Cause I should have such lots of sugar put into me!"—Punch.

AN UNWELCOME TOAST.—A bashful young man mortally offended the bride of his most intimate friend by stammering, when taken aback by a request for a toast at the wedding, "Tom, my friend, may you have a wedding once a year as long as you live!"

"NOT YET!"

Policeman: "Now then; move on with you child."

Girl: "Shan't; he ain't mine!"

Policeman: "Whose is he then?"

Girl: "My mother's, of course."—Fun.

POOR DE RONTAON!—Yes, it was rather weak of Talbot Bultrode de Robbison to buy an altar at all, if he were under the impression that it is a swell and proper thing to wear in town; but, having bought one, he ought not to be so dreadfully afraid of splashing the skirts.—Judy.

FRIENDSHIP.

(A Fragment.)

Sweet Thing (in hat): "Oh, don't mention it, dear! I was only afraid that you might feel jealous."

Sweet Thing (on sofa): "Oh, thank you, dear, I'm sure; but you never need think I could feel jealous of you!"—Judy.

WELL NAMED.—By help of the Court Circular we follow with great interest the movements of the Grand Duke Serge, fifth brother of the Dauphin of Edinburgh, now visiting our island. "Serge" does not sound a particularly Imperial name, but how appropriate to a brother of our own Russia Duck!—Punch.

"LE JEU NE VAUT PAS LA CHANDELLE."

Old Gent (having had to pay twice): "But I'm positive I handed you the money! It may probably have dropped down the slit in the door!"

Conductor: "Slit in the door! Well, 'tain't likely I'm going to turn the 'bus upside-down for sixpence!"—Punch.

A DIFFERENCE.—A stockbroker returning to his office the other day after a substantial luncheon with a client said complacently to his head clerk, "Mr. Putkin, the world looks different to a man when he has a bottle of champagne in him." "Yes, sir," replied the clerk significantly, "and he looks different to the world."

MORRID CURIOSITY CHECKED.—"Did you steal the complainant's coat?" asked a magistrate of a seedy individual who was arraigned before him. "I decline to gratify the morbid curiosity of the public by answering that question," responded the seedy individual, with a scornful glance at the reporters.

A BURNING SHAME.—A ruffian was recently charged at the Thames police-court with burning a woman's face with a lighted candle. The magistrate, probably thinking that a light offence deserved a light punishment, gave him six weeks. When the vivoreactor has done his "short six" he might set a few magistrates on fire. Some of them want brightening up.—Fun.

A LUCKY ESCAPE.—After dinner one day at a Liverpool table-d'hôte a young man was relating how he had miraculously escaped from a fearful shipwreck. "Yes," said he, "fifteen of my friends were on board. The vessel went down, and they were all lost." "But how," asked a listener, whose interest was painfully excited, "did you manage to escape?" "Oh," was the calm reply, "I was on board another vessel."

LITERARY APPRECIATION.—A gentleman relates, after leaving a paper of which he was the editor, and returning on a visit, that he wrote a leader for the

new editor, and he really thought it good—better than he had written for months. Next day he met an old acquaintance with a paper in his hand. "Ah," said he, "this paper is but a miserable thing now—nothing like what it was when you had it!"—and pointing to the article he had written, he continued: "Look, for instance, at that thing! Who would read such trashy stuff as that? Why didn't the idiot let you write the article?"

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY.

Cheerful Conductor (to cold and hungry old gentleman, who has been waiting half an hour for the last bus): "What was you a-skin' of, sir?"

Old Gentleman: "I asked you if you were full inside, confounded you! Can't you hear?"

Conductor (more cheerfully still): "Oh, yes, sir, thankie. Had a nice hot sausage and later just afore startin'." Hit 'em up, Joseph!"

[Bus drives on.]—*Judy*.

"OMNES IGNORUM PRO MAGNIFICIO!"

(A fascinating young Irish lady, with a lovely brogue, is warbling characteristic popular ditties in the Neapolitan dialect, encouraged thereto by the consciousness that her enraptured audience doesn't know a word of even ordinary Italian.)

Enthusiastic Youth: "How awfully beautifully your sister sings, Mr. O'Dowd! How awfully vividly she recalls to one's mind the—the—the Chiaja, you know—and Vesuvius—and—the deep blue Italian sky!"

Mr. O'Dowd: "Ah, thin, doesn't she, sor? Ye've been in Italy, sor?"

Enthusiastic Youth: "A—a—a—n—no!"

Mr. O'Dowd: "No more have Oi—no more has me sister!"—*Punch*.

NURSERY RHYMES FOR THE TIMES.

Sing, sing, what shall I sing?
Of lawyers' wigs and gowns,
Of costs, costs, and still more costs,
And shillings charged as crowns!
Sing, sing, what shall I sing?
Of one sane bird who saw
That, play, play how you may,
To win is to lose, at Law.

Boys and girls, come out to play,
Kriegerpiel is the game to-day!
Bring your books and bring your brains,
Boys and girls, and plan campaigns.
Robin-a-Bobbin was scarcely ten,
But knew enough for a score of men;
His sole delight was going to school,
Yet was Robin-a-Bobbin next door to a fool.

—*Punch*.

ENTOMOLOGICAL.—It sometimes, though not often, happens that visitors to the insect-room at the British Museum are utterly ignorant of entomology, and, in consequence, are very troublesome to the officials. Once two young ladies overpassed the well-tried patience of the officer who was showing the insects, their chief idea of butterflies being the effect they would produce if worn as ornaments. At last, when the Agrias drawer was opened, their guide gravely pointed out this species, and told them that it was called the shaving-brush butterfly, because it used such brushes every morning in shaving itself. Furthermore, he said that it was a swift insect, and difficult to catch, but that it could always be taken by putting out overnight a basin of soap-suds, which attracted the butterfly, and enabled the collector to catch as many as he wished. And the ladies believed him!

HOW DAVID TRICKED HIS WIFE'S BAD TEMPER.
David, a man of meek and kindly spirit, had long suffered from the clatter-patter, never-ending tongue of his worse half. One day a herb doctor greeted David at his work with a:

"Well, Master David, how be you?"

"Oh, I be very well, thanks to ye, but my wife is not so very nicely."

"Indeed," said the gatherer of simples, with a quick ear for an ailment, "what may be the matter wi' sho, Master David?"

"Well," said David, in his usual quiet way, "she have a bad breaking out about her mouth every now and then, that troubles her and me very sore, I assure you, master doctor."

"Well," said the latter, "I could make a grand cure for her, I'll warrant; I have a salve 'at I make of the juice of the juniper tree, and by bilin' up of a vast lot of different kinds of things, it cures 'er in less than no time."

"Indeed," said David, "an' what might your charge be, now, for a box of 'that intiment 'at would quite cure her?"

"Oh," said the herbalist, looking anxiously up in David's face, "only a matter of a shilling."

"Well, that's dirt cheap," said David. "If you see her I'll give eightpence; there, now."

With this offer the doctor set off home to prepare his nostrum, and straightway hid the very

next day to David's house, box in hand. There he found Mrs. Price, and went at once to business.

"Well, Mrs. Price, your husband told me that ye have betime a bad breaking out about the mouth, and I've brought a box o' fine intiment 'at will cure ye."

With this announcement Mrs. Price, rising up, at once seeing her husband's just, raised the brush with which she was sweeping the floor, and pummelled the doctor to her heart's content, even following to beat him a field from her house, he screaming all the while:

"Oh, Missus Price, be ye gone mad?"

From that day, however, Mrs. Price has been wholly cured of her scolding habits. David has only to look up in her face and say, "I'll get a box of that intiment," and there's an end of the matter. David honourably paid the doctor his 1s. 6d., and also treated him, to make him forget the pummelling.

THE FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW.

THE stars shone through the frosty night
Like twinkling crystals coldly bright,
While pale and calm the moon looked down
On the weird landscape crisp and brown.

The village, nestled 'neath the hill,
Slept in the moon-rays, stark and still,
Save where stray glimmerings far apart
Marked vigils of some anxious heart.

O'er field and forest, path and stream,
A solemn silence reigned supreme,
Till startled by the sudden bay
Of some roused watch-dog far away.

But where, athwart the brookside glade,
The giant mill-wheel flung its shade,
Two met—and parted. Few and brief
Their words; but what they wrought of grief!

Ere morning o'er the hill-top crept
And stirred the trustful hearts that slept,
The Wizard of the Snow had passed,
And o'er their fields his mantle cast.

The sun rose golden and serene,
And flung gems broadcast o'er the scene,
And showed, across the frozen flow,
Two little footprints in the snow.

The miller whistled as he bade
Her mother call his little maid,
And wondered why the guest from town,
The handsome stranger, was not down.

Ah! miller, wonder ye again!
Oh! mother, call your maid in vain!
For naught of either shall you know
Save those small footprints in the snow.

'Tis many a year since then; but still,
Where'er from some wood-circled hill
I look, upon a winter night,
O'er a weird landscape cold and white,

And see the glimmerings far and few,
That glance the cottage casements through,
My heart recalls with anguish'd throes
Those little footprints in the snow. D. C. S. G.

GEMS.

WE should rest satisfied with doing well, and let others talk of us as they please, for they can do us no injury, although they may think they have found a flaw in our proceedings, and are determined to rise on our downfall or profit by our injury.

We are ruined not by what we really want but by what we think we do; therefore never go abroad in search of your wants. If they be real wants, they will come home in search of you; for he that buys what he does not want will soon want what he cannot buy.

SUFFER not your thoughts to dwell on the injuries you have received, or the provoking words that have been spoken to you. Not only learn the art of neglecting injuries at the time you receive them, but let them grow less and less every moment, till they disout of your mind.

AIN castles are as old as the world; we believe there is not a man, woman, or child but who has built or is building them. And they will continue to build and be built as long as there is a living person on the earth. The child looks forward to the time when it will have grown up to manhood or womanhood, and tells what it will do and be when it reaches that period of life.

THE Thames Ironworks Company have contracted to build for the Portuguese Government an armoured iron frigate of about 2,000 tons, the cost of which, independent of its machinery, will be 125,000l.

THE FUNERAL OF THE ELECTOR OF HESSE.—Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge

was not able to send a representative to the funeral of her cousin, the Elector of Hesse, the head of her house, in consequence of the last sad ceremony following so rapidly upon the announcement of his death.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

RUSSIAN SALAD.—Take about eight medium-sized potatoes, nicely boiled and floury; peel, and while hot, with a silver fork, break them into little pieces about the size of small nuts. Boil hard about five or six eggs, chop the yolks and whites separately; take about half a tumbler of best Lucoa oil, a little vinegar, pepper, salt, capors; a couple of chopped anchovies, if for a fish salad, or the liver of a fowl bruised in the sauce, if for fowl, is a great improvement, if the latter, chop the meat into small pieces; or if fish, shred it into little bits. Take half the eggs and mix with the sauce, place it in the dish you intend serving it in; smooth the surface, cover it lightly with the remainder of the chopped eggs, and garnish with pickles and beet-root, cut into shape, with a tiny bunch of flowers in the centre. The great advantages of this dish is that you may put with your potatoes any scraps of meat or fish you happen to have cold, and it makes a very pretty summer dish. You must regulate the quantity of oil by the meat put in the salad, as some meats and fish are much more dry than others. The object in breaking the potatoes while hot with a silver fork is that they are much more light than if cut with a steel instrument.

STATISTICS.

RELIGIOUS BODIES IN PRUSSIA.—According to official statistics, Prussia, in December, 1871, contained 15,985,082 members of the Evangelical Church, 4,642 Lutheran Separatists, 1,801 Moravian Brethren, 1,710 Irvingites, 8,818 Baptists, 13,950 Mennonites, 1,809 German and Christian Catholics, 8,288,169 Roman Catholics, 1,387 Greeks, and 24,880 persons belonging to other sects—making a total of 24,518,550, with 325,510 Jews. Of these 118,863 males and 151,709 females could read and write imperfectly, and 863,843 males and 1,896,494 females were illiterate. The latter class was composed of 1,083,517 Evangelicals, 1,150,290 Roman Catholics, 23,624 Jews, and 2,846 Dissenters. The German Empire contained at the same date 25,573,709, or 62 per cent. Evangelicals; 14,867,463, or 58 per cent. Roman Catholics; 82,155 Dissenters; 512,158 Jews; and 17,156 persons of other persuasions or who disclaimed any creed, making a total of 41,058,641.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MARBLE of a fine quality has been discovered in Los Angeles county, California.

THE Prussian Government has allowed the body of the Elector of Hesse to be placed in a vault at Cassel. Our Queen has sent a telegram of condolence to Prague.

THE MARQUIS OF RIPON.—The Marquis of Ripon, who, prior to his perversion to Rome, was building a large church in connection with the Church of England, has caused the same to be finished, and is about to hand it over, not to the communion he has lately joined, but to that which he has left.

COUNTERFEIT COIN.—All the counterfeit coin which has come into the possession of the metropolitan police during the last fourteen years is to be melted down in the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich. It weighs about 3 cwt., and represents several hundreds of pounds of current coin. The great bulk consisted of half-crowns and florins.

KIW GARDENS.—King George II. having ordered his gardens at Kew and Richmond to be opened for the admission of the public during part of the summer, his gardener, finding it troublesome to him, complained to the king that the people gathered the flowers. "What," said the monarch, "are my people fond of flowers? Then plant some more."

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS.—Any one afflicted with a mania for statistics may be glad to learn just now, when the last annual International Exhibition has been proved to be a failure, that the aggregate number of visitors to the five great International Exhibitions of the world is 32,959,097, and the aggregate value of the sums received from them 1,598,164l. 10s. 10d.

JAPANESE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY.—As another instance of the imitative character of the Japanese it is said that their Government is taking into consideration the establishment of a representative assembly. The scheme had been thought of when the dispute with China about Formosa interfered to prevent its realization. Next spring may, it would now appear, see it in operation.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ROSCIEUS.—We do not know.
NELLIE G.—Try some of the larger music-sellers.
A. W.—You should have sent better particulars.
WILLIE.—It is your turn to give full particulars.
U. R. K.—1. No. Saint Valentine conferred great privileges upon ladies. 2. Very good. 3. Yes.
ROBERT A.—We cannot advise. The symptoms should be seen by a surgeon.
OCTAGUND.—1. Very frequently. 2. About 300l. a year. 3. Gurney's, we believe.
FLORENCE M.—If your request was intended for publication it cannot, to that extent, be gratified.
JENNIE.—We do not as a rule communicate by post with our correspondents.
HUGH J.—We are unable to render you any further assistance.
KATE C.—The handwriting would be improved if the flourishes in the tail letters were abandoned.
LENN.—Perhaps all that should be said about the handwriting is that it is legible enough.
FREDRICK.—The handwriting is free, legible, firm, commanding, and not without style.
HARRY L.—The letter is too vague. Expectations are sometimes fallacious.
THERAPY.—You have merely to send particulars. We do not find the enclosure to which your letter refers.
SUSAN.—The usual course is to send an advertisement to the daily morning newspapers.
M. J. P.—The handwriting is good enough, but the spelling is faulty.
H. C.—You have merely to state your views with as much precision as possible.
M. B.—The probability is that you would hear from the lady direct or not at all.
K. G.—There are processes at law by means of which a landlord can forcibly eject a tenant from premises to the possession of which the tenant has no title.
ALPHA.—At your age the sum named would, if properly dealt with, purchase an annuity equal to twelve shillings a week or thereabouts.
A. D.—Prepayment is required at the rate of three halfpenny stamps for each number of the LONDON READER sent by post.
P. M.—Your former letters were duly replied to. Your better course seems to be the relinquishment of your views about matrimony for the present.
DONALD M.—A young lady should hesitate before she commits her happiness to the keeping of a youth of nineteen.
E. J. H.—We can only refer you to our standard rule, always appearing on this page, to the effect that we do not undertake to return manuscripts.
A. SUBSCRIBER (Gibraltar).—We are inclined to think the chances are against you, unless you have any connections to whom you can look for aid.
GIPSY QUEEN.—A mixture of powdered brickdust and turpentine is useful to take the rust away from a steel fender.
J. G.—We are sorry to refuse your polite request. It is not, however, within our province to accommodate you in the way required.
RING THE BELL.—Your case does not seem to be one of those in which it is desirable to take time by the forelock, on the contrary, it is one in which you should be advised to wait until you arrive in port.
E. J.—It is usually considered imprudent for a youth of twenty to marry. In the time to come you will not regret yielding to the entreaty which begs you to abandon ideas of marriage until five or six years have passed.
RECTOR.—A gentleman should bow as well as raise his hat when he is introduced to a lady out of doors. When the introduction takes place indoors a gentle inclination of the head is taken as a bow; and this is so when persons of the same sex are introduced to each other.
ROSE AND ANNIE.—In the histories of names the name "Rose" is said to belong to the class of personal characteristics and to have been originally applied to a young lady who had a rosy complexion, "Annie" is classed under the abstract qualities, is derived from the Hebrew, and signifies good-will.
JOHN.—The sensation of dryness in the throat of which you complain is very usual during protracted speaking. The best specific you can use is Cooper's Effervescent Lozenges, which will not like a charm in removing the unpleasant feeling. They are equally efficacious in obviating tickling of the fauces, which frequently annoys the vocalist, and also in alleviating thirst, from whatever causes it may arise.
S. SCOTT.—Mr. Tomlinson says that "Mastic is a favourite spirit-varnish for its working very easily, and is used as a picture varnish and for delicate works of a pale colour. Damar with turpentine is nearly colour-

less, and, mixed with mastic, tolerably hard and flexible, so that it is fitted for maps and similar work." He dissuades amateurs from attempting to concoct varnish, and advises them to buy of the varnish-maker; he adds that spirit-varnishes are applied by means of camel-hair pencils and brushes.

GIPSY FEE.—Straws show which way the wind blows, truly, and cards like you play with can tell that someone would like to fall in love. Neither the sighings of the wind nor the longings of a lover in expectancy are, however, such unusual occurrences as of themselves to attract attention sufficient to stimulate inquiry into a vague vagary or fantastic phantasm. And so your indefinite, because nameless and addressless, communication rebounds from our not inhospitable port in search of some fortunate, may be impossible, wind, to bear you to the lady of your love.

LENN.—We venture to think that the solution of your interesting and elaborately constructed enigmas is found in that hero of the farmyard and village green, yelped a cock; the gallus domesticus of the ornithologists. Our interpretation is only suggestive, for we have not previously seen the exploits and attributes detailed by your enigmas associated with the invaluable domestic biped. We are aware, however, of the great interest of various kinds which this vigilant and undaunted bird has evoked, and have read, not only of the fanciful superstition which supposes that his familiar morning salutation is able to dispel all spirits "whether in sea or fire, in earth or air," but also of the benefits attributed to his nocturnal crowing; for—

"Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawnning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit walks abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets
Strike;
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm;
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

DREAMING.

I've drawn my curtains close about,
And stirred the blazing fire,
Which now a genial warmth throws out,
While dancing flames leap higher;
Without, the night is cold and drear,
The feathery flakes fall fast;
The sighing of the wind I hear,
Borne on the wintry blast.

Within, where all is warm and bright,
I sit and dream of these,
And wonder if your thoughts, to-night,
As fondly turn to me.
What fairy visions, sweet and fair,
Unto my sight unfold!
What charming castles in the air,
Delighted, I behold!

I do not dream of marble halls,
Of rank, nor fame, nor gold;
Of pictures hung on frescoed walls,
Nor gems of price untold;
I only dream of home, sweet home,
Where calm content shall reign,
Where cold distrust must never come,
To fill the heart with pain.

Where Love, the household god, shall be
Within two hearts enshrined;
His gentle spectre all shall see,
With immortals entwined;
For where he rules all jealous doubts
And fear shall flee away,
For perfect love doth cast fear out,
And keep all doubt at bay.

J. C.

EMMA, eighteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, good tempered, would like to correspond with a tall, dark young man who is fond of home and of a loving disposition.

ANNIE S., eighteen, of the medium height, fair, pretty and amiable, would like to correspond with a dark, good looking gentleman who would prize a loving wife.

CAT HEAD, twenty-four, 6ft. ginger hair, wishes to marry a young woman who is fond of home and will make him comfortable while he is at home.

AGNES, eighteen, dark hair, hazel eyes, very loving, domesticated, and fond of music, would like to correspond with a good looking, tall young man who is fond of home.

LENN, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-one, 5ft. 8in., fair complexion, hazel eyes, considered good looking, would like to correspond with a female about his own age, pretty, and with musical tastes.

CHICKER, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-five, medium height, brown eyes, dark curly hair, wishes to correspond with a young lady of a dark complexion, amiable, fond of home and music.

GRACE W. wishes to marry a captain or mate of a ship or one who is employed in a seaport town; she is twenty-six, tall, tolerably good looking and has blue eyes and brown hair.

LOTTIE H., tall, dark, and twenty-one, with natural curling hair and gray eyes, would like to correspond with a dark, good tempered young man who can keep a wife respectfully and who is not over thirty.

MARIAN, twenty-two, medium height, good tempered, considered by her friends good looking, would like to correspond with a tall, steady young man, who would make a loving and affectionate husband.

TOPGALLANT YARD, twenty-one, medium height, good looking, dark curly hair, wishes to correspond with a young woman about nineteen who thinks she could love a seaman gunner.

WHEEL AND LEAD, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a female, age about twenty-one; she should be fond of music and dancing and have a small income. "Wheel and Lead" has brown eyes, a fresh complexion, and is considered good looking.

H. G., a gentleman, fifty, tall, dark, and well built with a good home and fair means, would like to correspond with a view to matrimony with a well educated and domesticated lady somewhat younger than himself, who is fond of a good home and refinement.

FRANCES and **LAWRANCE**, twenty and twenty-one, medium height, good looking, wish to correspond with

two young gentlemen in very good positions; they must be tall, handsome and steady, age about 24. "Frances" has light hair and eyes, "Lawrence" has dark brown hair, and eyes; both have loving dispositions and are well domesticated. Two companions preferred.

LOVING KNUX, seventeen, blue eyes, fair, light brown hair, very domesticated, good looking, good tempered, and musical, would like to correspond with a fair, good looking young gentleman who is fond of home, good tempered and loving.

T. W., who is twenty-eight, fair, dark eyes, medium height, a well educated and musical mechanic of steady and industrious habits, of a cheerful and very benevolent nature, would like to correspond with a virtuous and intelligent young lady with a view to matrimony.

SHANK PANTER twenty-two, 5ft. 8in., good looking, fair complexion, blue eyes, auburn hair, wishes to correspond with a young lady, about twenty, who thinks she could love a sailor; she should be medium height, have a fair complexion and hazel eyes.

SILVERSMITH, a young, business-like fellow, twenty-three, and has splendid prospects before him, is desirous of marrying a nice young Protestant lady, with an income, but a loving heart indispensable—one to bear life's trials and pleasures with him; he is well connected and truly honourable, he is dark and of medium height.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

JAMES by—"Emma," twenty-one, brown hair, blue eyes and passable in looks.

LOUIE by—"B. A.," a clerk, well educated, musical, and of agreeable disposition.

WILLIAM by—"M. J. P.," she has brown hair, blue eyes, and is religious.

ROMEO by—"S. B.," tall, good tempered, loving, and fond of home.

SOPHIA by—"Frank D.," twenty-two, tall, good looking and comfortably situated.

A. F. by—"S. B.," tall, brown hair, blue eyes, loving, fond of home, and would make a good wife.

J. P. by—"Marion," nineteen, brown hair, blue eyes, loving and good tempered.

LAURIE by—"M. Q. S.," twenty-two, 5ft. 6in., dark, good looking and very fond of home.

FANNY by—"F. E. S.," twenty-five, dark, of a lovable disposition, engaged in the shipping business, salary 70l. a year.

MARION by—"J. M. S.," forty-two, 5ft. 8in., a working man in a good situation, fair, blue eyes, would make a home happy, is a teetotaler.

ASHANTER TOM by—"Maude," who thinks she is all he requires; and by—"Ethel F.," rather short, dark hair, blue eyes, rather fair complexion, fond of a home, and would make him a loving wife.

J. A. by—"Polly W.," nineteen, medium height, dark curly hair, considered very good looking, can sing well, has sung before 400 people; would make a good wife providing she could meet with a good partner for life.

W. J. Q. by—"Dora," twenty-eight, she is highly respectable, musical, refined, fond of children and thoroughly domesticated; would make a devoted and affectionate wife.

PARNELL LASHIDE by—"Fern," eighteen, next May, fair, fond of home and children, extremely good looking, late of Ipswich, 5ft. 8in., thinks she would make him an excellent wife.

LENNIS M. V. by—"Serrano," twenty-five, medium height, fair, and of a cheerful, loving disposition; by—"Will A.," twenty-eight; he has expectations, and is at present in a good situation as manager, he has a light complexion, blue eyes, is good tempered and amiable.

LOTTIE by—"Ernest," twenty-four, but unfortunately not a chemist; his income, however, arising from the profession of a surveyor, is between 200l. to 300l. per annum, and is capable of a large extension. "Ernest" is dark, 6ft. 1in., very domesticated and fond of children.

WILLIAM and **JAMES** by—"Polly" and "Winifred." "Polly" is twenty, tall, fair, of a loving disposition and religious; "Winifred" is nineteen, tall, fair, very good looking and good tempered; they think they will suit "William and James"; by—"Annie and Lizzie."

"Annie" is twenty, medium height, light brown hair, blue eyes and good tempered, would prefer "William." "Lizzie" is nineteen, very dark eyes, dark brown hair, and considered by many good looking. "Lizzie" is domesticated and the daughter of a tradesman, she would like to correspond with "James" by—"Etta and Ida."

They are both considered good looking, domesticated, and loving, and think they would suit "William and James"; and by—"Bessie and Edie." "Bessie" is twenty-two, tall, good looking, with gray eyes and brown hair; "Edie" is nineteen, has a fair complexion, blue eyes and light brown hair—both good tempered, loving, and fond of home.

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